Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • March/April 2009 • $4.50

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QUEEN'S DAY

Chanting at the World's Biggest Street Party

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 43, No. 2 • March / April 2009

FEATURES

Founder's Lecture

6 How to Find Real Knowledge

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that to get perfect knowledge even of this world, we must hear from sources beyond it.

12 Plain Living and High Thinking: An English Lesson with Śrīla Prabhupāda

A discussion of Prabhupāda's motto for expressing his vision of a spiritual culture close to nature.

20 Sītā Devī's Inner Harmony

The *Rāmāyaṇa* proclaims the astonishing devotion and character of Lord Rāmacandra's queen.

How I Came to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

31 The Book Under My Pillow

At age seven, her grandfather bought her a five-rupee book that would eventually change her life.

36 Chanting at the World's Biggest Street Party

How Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees revel among the revelers.

44 Don't Look Now, But There's A Goddess in Your Pocket

The word used for "money" in Hare Kṛṣṇa lingo suggests why it's not the root of all evil.

49 Śrī Rādhā: The Feminine Divine

A complete understanding of God must include awareness of His feminine aspect.

Book Excerpt

52 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's South India Tour

In the early 1930s, the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda set up memorials at South Indian holy places visited by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

ead

DEPARTMENTS

Letters 4

Calendar 10

Glossary 11

The Vedic Observer 16

e-Krishna 19

Book Section: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 25
How to Worship the Lord

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out 29
Forced to Bow Down

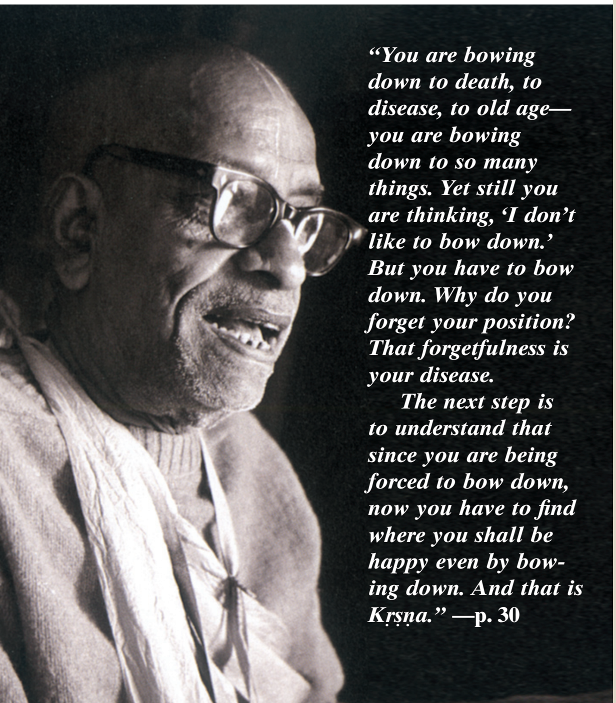
Window on the Spiritual World 33

Centers Around the World 59

From the Editor 62
Stages of Consciousness

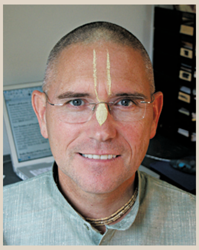
Vedic Thoughts 67

COVER Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees chant the holy names of God at a massive celebration in Amsterdam. Please see the article beginning on page 36. (Photo by Tina Kontrec.)



> *"You are bowing down to death, to disease, to old age—you are bowing down to so many things. Yet still you are thinking, 'I don't like to bow down.' But you have to bow down. Why do you forget your position? That forgetfulness is your disease.*
>
> *The next step is to understand that since you are being forced to bow down, now you have to find where you shall be happy even by bowing down. And that is Kṛṣṇa."* —p. 30

WELCOME



THIS ISSUE contains three articles on the feminine aspect of God. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, following the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, states that God and His feminine consort are two persons and one person simultaneously. Though this idea is said to be inconceivable, defying logic, it implies that our conceptions of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Viṣṇu, and other full manifestations of God are incomplete if we neglect to consider Rādhā, Sītā, and Lakṣmī as parts of their identity. As Śrīla Prabhupāda would often point out, God is not Kṛṣṇa alone but Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The three Goddess articles in this issue focus on their unique identities as well as their relationships with their masculine counterparts.

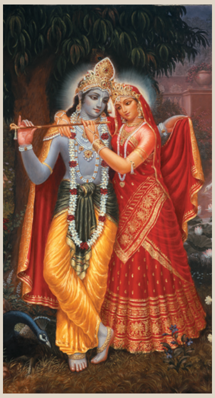
This issue also contains a new centerfold painting of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu. Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and Nityānanda is His brother, Balarāma. They appeared in Bengal five hundred years ago to establish *saṅkīrtana*—the congregational chanting of the names of God—as the prescribed religion for the current age.

Saṅkīrtana is the heart of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. That's why you'll find devotees chanting in public places around the world. Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa's "Chanting at the World's Biggest Street Party" is a good example of *saṅkīrtana* in action today.

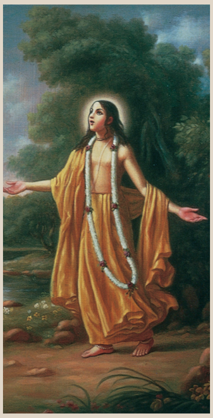
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

Awe and Reverence More Realistic

I'm reading about Kṛṣṇa *bhakti,* and although undoubtedly the ultimate in terms of God love, it really seems beyond my capacity at present. Becoming fixed in reverential worship of Him as Śrī Viṣṇu seems a lot closer to my present nature. More attainable or realistic.

What to speak of spotlessly pure, selfless devotion, I've hardly thought of God in my life! Is there any fault or loss in focusing more on reverential, regulated, dutiful service? Will the Lord be unhappy with me?

Sunita Goel
Via the Internet

Our reply: Even in ISKCON we worship the Lord in reverence. It is only when one is a liberated soul situated in pure *bhakti* that one can relate to the Lord with familiarity and intimacy.

Technically, even though ISKCON temples have deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, They are receiving our worship as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. Temple worship is always in the mood of awe and reverence.

The direct worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is done in our eternal forms as *gopīs, gopas,* etc., in Goloka Vṛndāvana. That is a very lofty goal, but one we should aspire to. Our progress begins with regulated service in awe and reverence; gradually spontaneous intimate devotion arises. That is the path given to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda and the other spiritual masters in the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

So your situation is not different from that of devotees worshiping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in our present impure condition.

Thanks to the Youth

I would like to thank the youth of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement who have "stepped up to bat" to write for BTG and other publications as well as take responsibility in different areas of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This movement will continue to change the world. There is so much preaching to be done. So please try to take part in whatever way you can. May Kṛṣṇa bless you more and more in your endeavors.

We first-generation ISKCON devotees are certainly not getting any younger, and I'm beginning to feel more hopeful that Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement will go on nicely after we're gone.

Madana Mohana Mohinī Dāsī
Sandy Ridge, North Carolina

Why Tulasī Beads?

I was told that devotees wear *tulasī* beads all the time because after death (which may occur at any time) the Yamadūtas [messengers of the god of death] will not be able to approach the soul, and the Viṣṇudūtas [messengers of Lord Viṣṇu] will definitely come and take the soul back to Godhead. How do *tulasī* beads on the body protect the soul after its departure?

Padmapriya Ravic
Via the Internet

Our reply: Devotees wear *tulasī* beads for several reasons. One is that they mark a person as Kṛṣṇa's servant. Śrīla Prabhupāda compared them to a dog collar. "We are Kṛṣṇa's dog," he would say. "We are servants; He is master." Another reason is that *tulasī* is sacred. She is all-auspicious, and simply by touching her, karmic reaction is minimized and the tendency to act in a pious way is increased.

Still another reason is that *tulasī* beads identify us as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *Tilaka* and *tulasī* are signs of a practicing devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to wear both all the time, even when dressed in Western clothes, to identify ourselves as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Finally, there are the reasons you stated. A body adorned with *tilaka* and *tulasī* indicates to the Yamadūtas and Viṣṇudūtas that this body was used in Kṛṣṇa's service and therefore should not be treated as sinful. Please refer to the story of Ajāmila in the Sixth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Desiring to See God

I'm an engineering student and quite a spiritual person. Can I see Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma on my own? I want to talk to them. I want to see them without opening my eyes, but with my third eye. Is that possible?

Harish
Via the Internet

Our reply: You can certainly see and talk with Kṛṣṇa, but as you suggest in your letter, it is not possible to really see Him with material eyes. One must have transcendental vision, which comes from "anointing the eyes with the salve of love of Godhead." And that comes from rendering loving devotional service to the Lord under the guidance of someone who already has done that and has achieved a high degree of spiritual vision.

Being able to associate with the Lord is not a cheap thing. It cannot be purchased, or even earned by doing certain things. There is no quick formula for opening the transcendental vision. Those who say that by practicing some technique for a few months one can see God through the "third eye" are bluffing.

In the material world we are trained to get things very quickly and with as little investment as possible. This is not the case with the *darśana* of the Lord. The Lord is in the heart of every living entity. He knows not just what we do but also the state of our heart, mind, and consciousness. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that He is speaking with him because Arjuna is sinless, without envy, and His dear friend. The devotee aspires to develop these qualities, wanting to serve the Lord with selfless devotion, free from personal desire. When the Lord detects such an attitude, then from within the heart He "destroys with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.11) In this way Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Rāma rewards the devotee with pure devotion.

So if you want to see the Lord and speak to Him, you should follow the process given by the Lord Himself. Find and follow a spiritual master who is a servant of the Lord, and in time you too will develop pure love of God, which is the qualification for knowing, seeing, and talking with Him.

Hope for the Hectic Professional

I'm a professional with a hectic schedule. How can I manage my time for devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa?

Sahadan
Via the Internet

Our reply: The best way to manage to fit devotional service into your busy schedule is to try to offer everything you do, or some portion of everything you do, to Kṛṣṇa. For example, offer your skills or the fruits of your work to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Offer to help at a temple and use your skills for the benefit of the deity, the temple, and the devotees. In Chapter Twelve of *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa gives several alternatives for conducting the process of devotional service. You can read that chapter for guidance.

Kṛṣṇa also says that offering Him a little water, a fruit, or a flower with love constitutes devotional service.

(*please turn to page 15*)

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FOUNDER'S LECTURE

Los Angeles—May 16, 1970

HOW TO FIND REAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of this world, acquired from sources within it, will always be imperfect and limited.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

vidyāṁ cāvidyāṁ ca yas
tad vedobhayaṁ saha
avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā
vidyayāmṛtam aśnute

"Only one who can learn the process of nescience and that of transcendental knowledge side by side can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death and enjoy the full blessings of immortality."
—*Śrī Īśopaniṣad,* Mantra 11

PEOPLE DO NOT understand what immortality is. Because they have no knowledge of the subject, they think it is a vague idea.

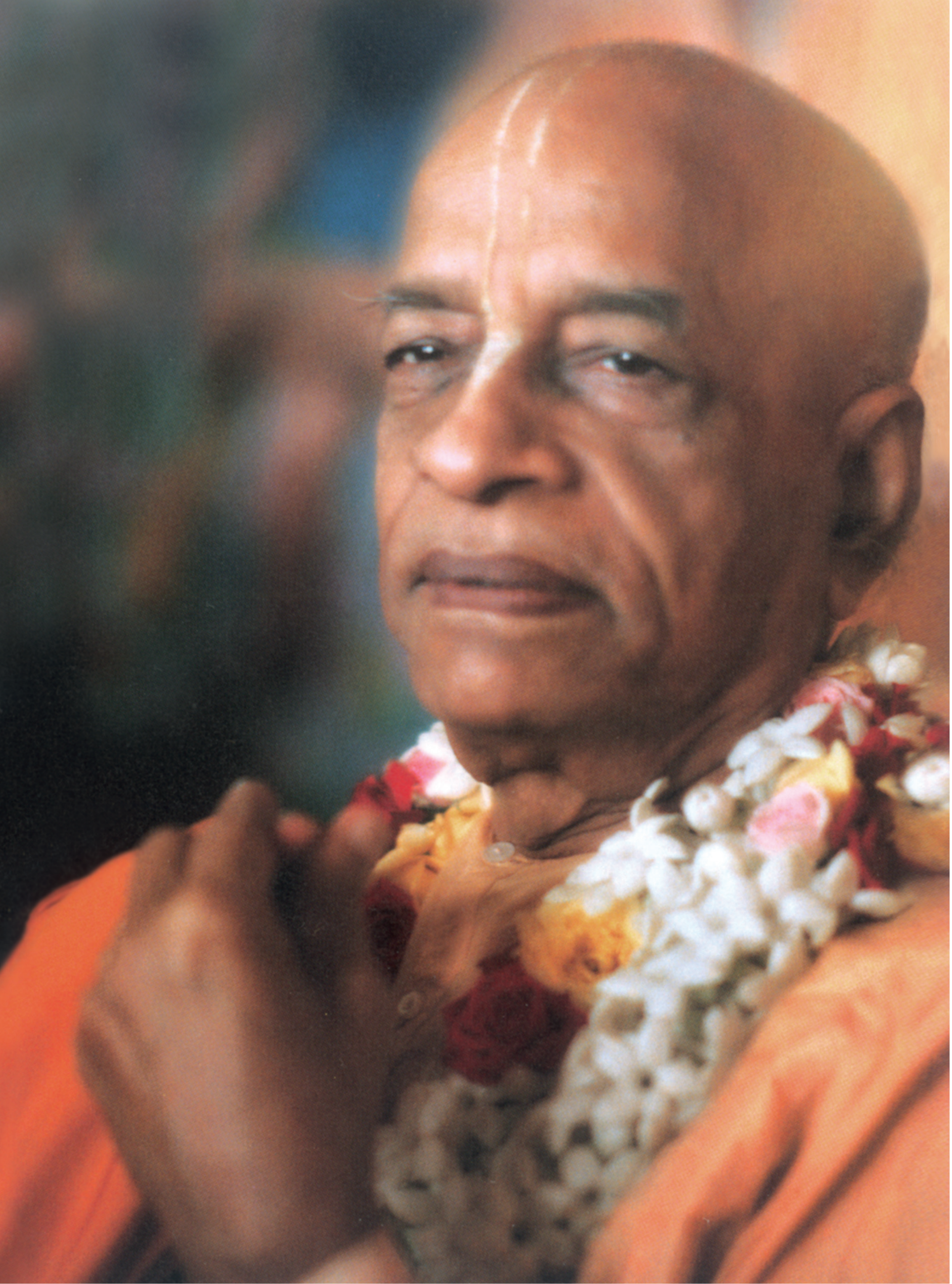
Nowadays we are very proud of our advancement of knowledge. But there are so many things we do not know, and can never know, even by our modern experimental knowledge. If you want real knowledge, you must go to the source of knowledge: the *Vedas. Veda* means "knowledge."

There are 108 Vedic *Upaniṣads,* out of which nine are very important. And out of those nine, this *Īśopaniṣad* stands first, then *Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. Upa* means "nearing." This knowledge will take you nearer to Kṛṣṇa.

For the *ācāryas,* the most learned members of society, the best evidence is *śruti,* which means the *Vedas.* They are not experimental knowledge. They are not knowledge established by the research work of contaminated, conditioned souls, whose senses are imperfect and who cannot see things as they are. They simply theorize: "It may be like that." They can say only that much. "It may be like that." That is not knowledge. Knowledge must be definite, with no mistake.

Conditioned souls commit mistakes, are deluded, have imperfect senses, and cheat. One who does not understand *Bhagavad-gītā* but writes a commentary on it is cheating the public. Because he has a name as a scholar, he takes advantage of the popularity of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and writes a commentary.

Such people claim that anyone can give his



own opinion. But that is not the process. You cannot give any opinion. Suppose I am a preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—how I can give an opinion on medical science? That is ludicrous. I can give opinions within my jurisdiction. That's all right. But if somebody asks for my opinion about some medical treatment or some legal implication, what can I do?

The Need for a Guru

To get real knowledge one has to go to the right person. Therefore it is said, *tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet:* "To understand these things properly, one must humbly approach, with firewood in hand, a spiritual master who is learned in the *Vedas* and firmly devoted to the Absolute Truth." [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12]

And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34) Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti tad jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth." *Tattva-darśinaḥ* means one who has seen, or realized, the Absolute Truth. You have to go to such a person.

In today's verse it is said, *avidyayā mṛtyum:* if you do not go to the spiritual master, then you remain in darkness. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* verse I quoted, the word *gacchet* means "*must* go." One cannot think, "Oh, I may accept a spiritual master, or I may not. There are books. I shall learn from them alone." No. In order to understand spiritual knowledge, you must go to a spiritual master. Otherwise you remain in *avidyā,* ignorance.

YOU'RE INVITED!

The Sunday Feast

Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday—for regulars as well as newcomers. Come by and relish the taste of the world's oldest cultural tradition. Call your nearest center to find out the schedule for the Sunday Feast.

(See "Centers," pages 59–61, or visit directory.krishna.com.)

Vidyām avidyām ca: two sides, darkness and light. You must know two things: what is *māyā,* or illusion, and what is Kṛṣṇa. Then your knowledge is perfect.

Of course, Kṛṣṇa is so nice that if somehow or other you surrender to Him, then all your business is finished. If you fully surrender to Kṛṣṇa, you will automatically learn what *māyā* is. Kṛṣṇa will give you intelligence from within. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 19.151) says, *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja:* By the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, one enters into devotional service. How is that? The mercy comes in parallel lines. If you have not found a spiritual master but are sincere, then Kṛṣṇa will take you to a bona fide spiritual master. And if you get a bona fide spiritual master, then he will take you to Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is always sitting within your heart as *caitya-guru,* the spiritual master within the heart. And that spiritual master within the heart manifests Himself externally as the spiritual master. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes, *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair uktas tathā bhāvyata eva sadbhiḥ. Sākṣāt* means "directly." The spiritual master is directly the representative of Kṛṣṇa. This is the verdict of all scriptures: *samasta śāstraiḥ.* And it is not only stated, but it is accepted as such by all great devotees: *sadbhiḥ.*

Vidyā and Avidyā

We should learn what *vidyā* and *avidyā* are. *Avidyā* means materialistic knowledge. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung, *jaḍa-vidyā yato, māyāra vaibhava:* "Advancement of material knowledge means advancement of *māyā's* jurisdiction." The more you become implicated and entangled in material knowledge, the less you can understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness. People who are supposed to be very advanced in material knowledge think, "What is this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement?" They have no attraction. For example, Indian boys who have come to America to learn technology question why we are interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They have rejected these things. When they see that I have introduced the things they have rejected in India, they are surprised.

I came to America because modern India has rejected spiritual knowledge. Indians are thinking that if they can imitate Western technology, then they will be happy. Such thinking is *māyā.* They do not see that those who are advanced three hundred times more than us in technology—what do they really have? They do not see that.

India cannot advance in technology like America or Europe because people in the Western countries have undertaken this business for a very long time. But Indian culture, beginning from the creation, is a spiritual culture.

Consider Vyāsadeva. He is the original guru of Vedic knowledge. How was he living? In a cottage at Badarikashrama in the Himalayas. But just see his knowledge! He has written so many *Purāṇas,* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is one of them. The Vedānta philosophy, *Mahābhārata*—if you study each verse, you can study for your whole life. In some book he has written 100,000 verses, and many are not less than 20,000 or 25,000 verses. Each verse is so full of meaning that one has to learn it throughout his life.

This is Vedic culture. There is no comparison to the knowledge contained within Vedic culture. And the knowledge is not only spiritual knowledge, but knowledge in other departments as well, such as astronomy and mathematics. It is not that in the olden age there were no airplanes. We get information about airplanes from the *Purāṇas.* They were so powerful and fast that they could easily reach other planets. Arjuna went to the heavenly planet.

It is not that there was no advancement of material knowledge in the Vedic age. The opulence was far beyond what we have now. Gold, jewels—every city, every person, had them, and what to speak of kings and rich men. Material advancement was there, but the people did not care much for it. They were interested in spiritual knowledge.

If we advance in *avidyā,* or material science, then we have to suffer repeated birth and death. And there is no guarantee where you shall get your next birth. That is not in your hands. You cannot dictate. Now you are a happy American, but after quitting this body you cannot dictate, "Please give me another American body." No. That is not possible. You may get an American body, but you may get an American animal's body. Then you are meant for the slaughterhouse.

Real Knowledge

Material knowledge, nationalism, socialism—they are simply spoiling time. Real knowledge is Vedic knowledge and knowledge of Kṛṣṇa. *Bahūnāṁ janmanām ante jñānavān māṁ prapadyate* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.19]. Therefore one who is in real knowledge after many, many births comes to Kṛṣṇa and surrenders unto Him. Such a person realizes, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti:* "Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, You are everything." [Bg. 7.19]

We are trying to distribute that knowledge freely, without any charge. Our mission is very great. You should be conscious of this responsibility. We are giving this highest thing to human society. Try to understand it thoroughly and distribute it. That will make you very dear to Kṛṣṇa. He says in the *Gītā, na ca tasmād manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ:* "No one is dearer to Me than one who is preaching knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness." So if you want to be very dear to Kṛṣṇa quickly, preach this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement very nicely.

Thank you very much.

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch, jh,** and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

CALENDAR

*This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to **www.krishna.com/calendar**.*

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

February 10–March 11

(*Month of Govinda*)

MARCH

7—Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

8—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

11—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.

March 12–April 9

(*Month of Viṣṇu*)

19—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

22—Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

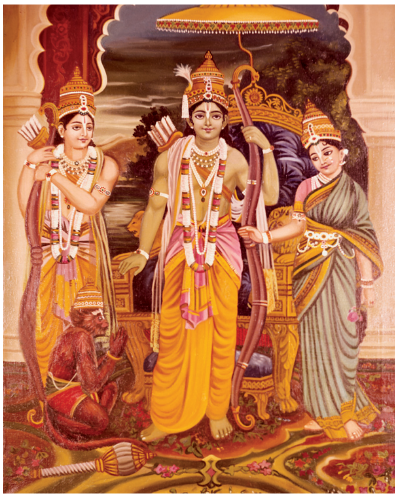
31—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the eleventh century.

APRIL

3—Śrī Rāma Navamī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till sunset, followed by feasting.

5—Kāmadā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

9—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's springtime *rāsa* dance. Balarāma Rāsa Yātrā, Lord Balarāma's *rāsa* dance. Appearance anniversary of Hanumānjī, eternal servant of Lord Rāma. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.



Lord Rāmacandra

April 10–May 9

(Month of *Madhusūdana*)

20—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata,* a biography on Lord Caitanya.

21—Varūthinī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

25—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

27—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing the temple deity with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

MAY

3—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

5—Mohinī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

6—Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

7—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

8—Nṛsiṁha Caturdaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting.

9—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master (Īśvara Purī).

Glossary

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Abs ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goo and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas.*

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

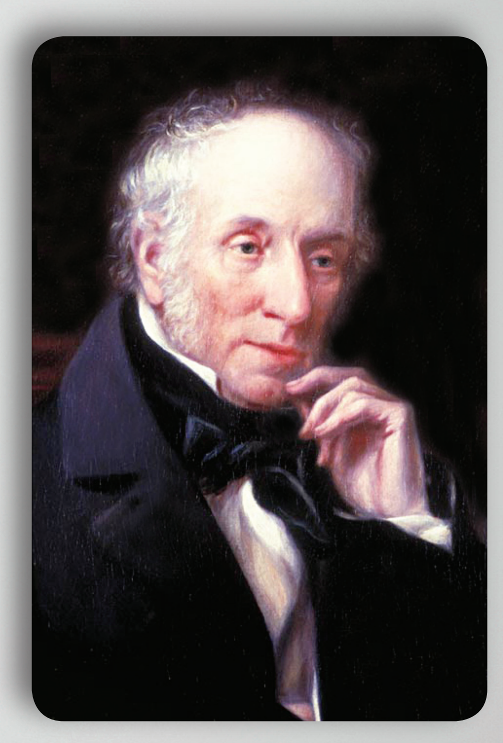
Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

PLAIN LIVING & HIGH THINKING

An English Lesson with Śrīla Prabhupāda

Prabhupāda drew his motto for natural spiritual culture from a line by a British poet.

by Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa



No grandeur now in nature
or in book delights us.
Rapine, avarice, expense,
this is idolatry; and these we adore:
plain living and high thinking are
no more . . .
—William Wordsworth

ANY STUDENT of Śrīla Prabhupāda will at once recognize the phrase "plain living and high thinking." It occurred frequently and memorably in his discourse. It functioned as a kind of motto or slogan to epitomize Prabhupāda's vision of a natural spiritual culture, an alternative to our modern, "soul-killing" industrial civilization.

Prabhupāda had made use of the phrase even before he journeyed to America in 1965. In an essay (published much later by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust as the second chapter of the booklet *Message of Godhead*), Prabhupāda had written that people nowadays are interested only in

> behavior like eating, sleeping, defending, and gratifying the senses. The material scientists—the modern quasi priests who invoke such material activities—invent many objects to gratify the material senses such as the eye, ear, nose, and tongue and ultimately the mind, and there results a field of unnecessary competition for enhancement of such material happiness, which leads the whole world into the whirlpool of uncalled-for clashes. The net result is scarcity all over the world, so much so that even the bare necessities of life, namely food and clothing, become objects of contention and control. And so arise all sorts of obstacles to the traditional, God-given life of plain living and high thinking.

After arriving in America, Prabhupāda quickly made known his desire to established self-sufficient rural communities to demonstrate this "God-given" style of life in practice. For example, he wrote in a letter to his disciple Hayagrīva Dāsa in June, 1968:

> So, if you seriously want to convert this new spot [in West Virginia] as New Vrindaban, I shall advise you not to make it very much modernized. But as you are American boys, you must make it just suitable to your minimum needs. Not to make it too much luxurious as generally Europeans and Americans are accustomed. Better to live there without modern amenities. But to live a natural healthy life for executing Krishna Consciousness. It may be an ideal village where the residents will have plain living and high thinking. For plain living we must have sufficient land for raising crops and pasturing grounds for the cows. If there is sufficient grains and production of milk, then the whole economic problem

Background photo: © Robert Churchill / istockphoto.com

> is solved. You do not require any machines, cinema, hotels, slaughterhouses, brothels, nightclubs—all these modern amenities.

Hayagrīva himself, a one-time college English instructor, recognized the phrase "plain living and high thinking," and wrote in an April 1967 issue of *Back to Godhead,* "Thoreau made Emerson's injunction of 'plain living and high thinking' famous when he set out to live outside Boston on an isolated tract of Emerson's land surrounding Walden Pond."

It is true that the expression—and its use to signify a return to a simpler, more innocent way of life—had its origin in English letters. However, Emerson himself had appropriated his "injunction" from an earlier source, a sonnet by William Wordsworth. The eminent English poet had composed the poem the year before Emerson's birth, as its very title shows: "Written in London, September, 1802."

It is likely that Prabhupāda knew Wordsworth's poem at first hand. Prabhupāda had, on his own telling, received a thorough education in English literature at Scottish Churches College in Calcutta. His professor, J. C. Scrimgeour, has been remembered as one who did much to spread appreciation for Shakespeare in Bengal.

Prabhupāda had learned well: I heard a devotee recall how Prabhupāda had once recited the entire plot of *The Merchant of Venice* to his astonished young American disciples. Prabhupāda had alluded to the play, and he was taken aback when no one seemed familiar with it. Hence, his Shakespeare lesson. We can see that Prabhupāda had been a good student with a good teacher. So it seems likely he had read Wordsworth's poem in college, and its theme, as well as its memorable phrase, would have stayed with him.

Here is the poem in question (an Italian sonnet):

Written in London,
September, 1802

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

It will be good to read it a few times. (Here the word "expense" means "wasteful expenditure, extravagance," and the word "homely," "unsophisticated, simple.")

As we see, the poem is a lament: "Plain living and high thinking are no more." Wordsworth was writing near the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and as this and others of his poems show, he was horrified by the emerging civilization of money and machinery. Here he mourns the way the ferocious dynamo of industrial civilization is uprooting England's traditional agrarian way of life, and along with it "our peace, our fearful innocence,/ And pure religion breathing household laws." The phrase "fearful innocence" nicely suggests how respect for divine law ("fearful") comes from and upholds an unsophisticated purity. The word "breathing" vividly invokes the ease and naturalness with which religion produces and pervades even the humblest of domestic arrangement.

Now from our vantage of two more centuries, we can see that Wordsworth was truly prophetic. (In fact, the protest against what is known as "advanced civilization" was an enduring theme of the Romanticism of which Wordsworth was an early participant.) It is no wonder, then, that Prabhupāda has embraced the poet's fine phrase.

How to Put BTG in Your Will

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put *Back to Godhead* in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. In the USA, bequests are free of estate tax and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government.* You can give needed support for *Back to Godhead* by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to* Back to Godhead, *18024 NW 112th Blvd., Alachua, FL 32615* (insert amount being given here) *to be used to support* Back to Godhead *and its related activities, including the Krishna.com website.*

A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name BTG as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living.

It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

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*If you live outside the USA, check the estate tax laws for your country.

To be sure, Prabhupāda has his own inimitable way of excoriating modern life—for example, in this purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.40:

> Human prosperity flourishes by natural gifts and not by gigantic industrial enterprises. The gigantic industrial enterprises are products of a godless civilization, and they cause the destruction of the noble aims of human life. The more we go on increasing such troublesome industries to squeeze out the vital energy of the human being, the more there will be unrest and dissatisfaction of the people in general, although a few only can live lavishly by exploitation.

Or again (*Bhāgavatam* 3.9.10, Purport):

> People who have no taste for the devotional service of the Lord are occupied in material engagements. Most of them engage during the daytime in hard physical labor; their senses are engaged very extensively in troublesome duties in the gigantic plants of heavy industrial enterprise. The owners of such factories are engaged in finding a market for their industrial products, and the laborers are engaged in extensive production involving huge mechanical arrangements. "Factory" is another name for hell. At night, hellishly engaged persons take advantage of wine and women to satisfy their tired senses, but they are not even able to have sound sleep because their various mental speculative plans constantly interrupt their sleep. Because they suffer from insomnia sometimes they feel sleepy in the morning for lack of sufficient rest. By the arrangement of supernatural power, even the great scientists and thinkers of the world suffer frustration of their various plans. . . .

Wordsworth was present near the beginning of the civilization of "gigantic industrial enterprises," and Prabhupāda near what will prove to be the end. That civilization can be characterized quite precisely as an overdevelopment, a hypertrophy, of the material mode of passion (*raja-guṇa*). As the *Bhagavad-gītā* notes, the result of *raja-guṇa* is misery. That misery is now upon us, and it will increase more and more.

We are being forced by the laws of nature to come to the end of the culture of "getting and spending," as Wordsworth called it in another poem. [See sidebar: "The World Is Too Much with Us."] In that poem, the poet longs to escape to an archaic past. It is our good fortune to have been shown the way forward by Prabhupāda, to the life of plain living and high thinking, in which the archaic past becomes one with an attainable future—The Next Big Thing.

Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa, an ISKCON guru and governing body commissioner, lives at the Philadelphia temple, where he joined ISKCON in 1971. He holds a Ph.D. in religion from Temple University.

The World Is Too Much with Us

by William Wordsworth

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;[1]
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,[2]
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus[3] rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton[4] blow his wreathed horn.

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[1] Brought up in an outdated religion.
[2] Meadow.
[3] Greek sea god capable of taking many shapes.
[4] Another sea god, often depicted as trumpeting on a shell.

LETTERS (*continued from page 5*)
Prayer and chanting—especially chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are devotional service. They will clean personal desire from your heart and allow you to focus on rendering loving service to Kṛṣṇa. These acts of devotion can be done in the car or on a train—anywhere. For example, you can chant softly to yourself or listen to devotional music, books, or lectures.

The ultimate barometer of devotional service is the love with which the offering is made. Lord Kṛṣṇa has everything, but anyone who renders Him service with love, free from envy, becomes His friend and devotee. So it is not what you do so much as how you do it.

Arjuna was fighting on a battlefield, and Kṛṣṇa told him, "Fight and think of Me."

Try to put Kṛṣṇa into your thoughts, and whenever possible offer some part of your work or the fruits of your work to Him. He will be happy and will reciprocate according to the degree of devotion in your offering.

Replies to letters were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P.O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. E-mail: editors@krishna.com.

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Bollywood Dreams: Is the Reel Glamour for Real?

"All this talk about equality . . . the only thing people really have in common is that they are all going to die . . ."
—Bob Dylan, American singer, poet, and author

"MANORA . . . Who?"

My seventy-five-year-old uncle, an avid moviegoer, struggled to remember the 1940s beauty queen Manorama. Her death some months ago went unnoticed by the glamour world. Only twelve people attended her funeral, and the Cine and TV Artists Association had nothing to say about her. Two other old-timers, comedian Rajinder Nath and award-winning film writer Suraj Sanim passed away recently, and the Bollywood buffs couldn't have cared less. The movie world is busy celebrating the rise of the macho men and sex symbols of the twenty-first century. As India feasts on the tabloids' sensational coverage of a young actress slapping an actor, and later reconciling with him, I tried to rewind and fast-forward life.

Six decades ago the fledgling gossip media covered Manorama's on- and off-screen exploits with great delight. Young starry-eyed men wooed her. A few years later the spotlight shifted to Suraj Sanim, who wrote one box office success after another. Meanwhile, Rajinder Nath's histrionics created a few laughs, and the party seemed to go on forever.

Return to 2008. Where are the cameras, the fans, the press? Abhishekh and Rakhi Sawant's patch-up, the Bacchan's wedding gala, and Sanjay "Munna Bhai" Dutt's arrest make headlines.

Fast-forward to 2080. The Bacchans are history, Munna Bhai is dead and gone, and new faces smile on the screen. Even as the young gyrate on the stage of time, the few older ones still hanging around cut sorry figures, nursing their time-inflicted wounds alone.

The Power of Time

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.30.1) reveals the debilitating power of time:

kapila uvāca
tasyaitasya jano nūnaṁ
nāyaṁ vedoru-vikramam
kālyamāno 'pi balino
vāyor iva ghanāvaliḥ

"The Personality of Godhead said: As a mass of clouds does not know the powerful influence of the wind, a person engaged in material consciousness does not know the powerful strength of the time factor, by which he is being carried." The lonely death of Manorama raises a discomforting question: "Am I making a significant difference in the world?" And the harsh reality stares at us:

by Vraja Vihārī Dāsa

"You mean nothing more to this world than a pebble on the beach." As the huge waves of time toss us insignificant pebbles around, we desperately seek to hold ground. History is filled with names that are worthless to us. Our exploits too are no big deal to successive generations. Yet we long to etch our names in the pages of history, and to be loved and adored forever.

Śrīla Prabhupāda reveals the plight of an ambitious man on his deathbed: "An attached family man wants his family members to carry him in a great procession even after his death, and although he will not be able to see how the procession goes, he still desires that his body be taken gorgeously in procession. Thus he is happy without even knowing where he has to go when he leaves his body for the next life. . . ." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.30.15, Purport).

Dreams Fizzle Out

Daily a thousand actors enter the big dream city of Mumbai. Most end up as roadside hawkers. The few who manage to squeeze into Bollywood languish as unrecognizable "junior artists," a dignified term for extras. And the one-in-a-million rags-to-riches story often ends as a big-to-lonely story. Beauty and physical abilities dwindle under the ravages of time, and fans seek new heroes. The older ones are left to wonder, "Was it really worth it?"

Mr. Time treads slowly but surely. Śrīla Prabhupāda captures this reality in his *Vrindavan Bhajan* (1954):

> Everyone has abandoned me, seeing me penniless—
> Wife, relatives, friends, brothers, everyone.
> This is misery, but it gives me a laugh. I sit alone and laugh.
> In this *māyā-saṁsāra,* whom do I really love?
> Where have my loving father and mother gone now?
> And where are all my elders, who were my own folk?
> Who will give me news of them, tell me who?
> All that is left of this family life is a list of names.
> As the froth on the seawater mixes again in the sea,
> *Māyā-saṁsāra's* play is just like that.
> No one is mother or father, or personal relative;
> Just like the sea foam, they remain but a short time.
> Just as the froth on seawater mixes again in the sea,
> The body made of five elements meets with destruction.
> How many bodies does the embodied soul take in this way?
> His relatives are all related merely to the temporal body . . .

Our attempt to find self-worth in ephemeral worship and honor is like a child's laborious drive to build sand castles on the beach. When tiny tsunamis crush our mansions to dust, the optimists are ready to make more. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16) extols us to stop such fruitless endeavors and instead seek the permanent:

ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ
punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya
punar janma na vidyate

"From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again."

Kṛṣṇa consciousness: A Transcendental Springboard

The term of human bodily existence is a type of imprisonment and also a rare chance for self-realization, a chance to go back home, back to Godhead. For a spiritual aspirant, life in this world is a springboard to enter the Lord's eternal abode. Thus a truly intelligent person searches for transcendental happiness. Devotional service in the association of sincere devotees provides the opportunity to experience this sublime joy. The process of *bhakti-yoga* also helps a spiritualist realize his or her personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Although all designations pertaining to the body are fleeting, the eternal soul dwelling within the body is special. Kṛṣṇa cares for all souls and eagerly awaits their taking the initiative to turn to Him. Through daily chanting of holy names of Kṛṣṇa, the original dormant love for Kṛṣṇa within us starts flowering. As our relationship with the Supreme Lord blossoms, it lends freshness and excitement to our lives.

As inevitable death approaches, a devotee is not fearful of losing anything of this world. In a typical Hindu marriage, the bride cries as she leaves her parents' house. This is because of her familial attachments and the uncertain future waiting to unfold at her husband's home. But if a long courtship precedes her wedding, she silently celebrates the parting from her loved ones. Similarly a devotee constantly associating with Kṛṣṇa through service and remembrance fills his life with serenity and bliss and easily turns from worldly attachments.

Rejecting Worldly Fame

The scriptures glorify the devotional service of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who ruled the planet five thousand years ago. On receiving the news of a curse that would cause his death within seven days, he was happy. Since his whole life was a dedicated loving service to the

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Lord, he had no regrets about leaving behind his kingdom and preparing for his untimely death. He took the situation as a blessing from the Lord and completely detached himself from the unlimited wealth and opulence that governed his life. His attraction to Kṛṣṇa was so strong that all his wealth and glory as an emperor paled in comparison. He joyfully gave it all up in preference to remembering Kṛṣṇa. Thus Kṛṣṇa consciousness offers a panacea for all our sufferings and lends substance to our otherwise dull, meaningless, and bruised existence.

As governments collapse and earthquakes strike, as infamy and tragedies recur, as superheroes meet with an inglorious end, we can seek solace and strength in our union with Kṛṣṇa. This bonding only grows with time, immune from the changing fortunes of this world. Riding on the ups and downs of life, Kṛṣṇa consciousness keeps us sane and joyful, even as the scandal-hungry media hunts for yet another fading star.

My Land, My People

by Murāri Gupta Dāsa

IN INDIA EACH STATE is like a small nation, with its own language and culture. When a politician in Maharashtra declared that his state is only for the natives and that people from other states should leave, his party members threatened and even attacked people from other states, prompting a mass exodus from Maharashtra.

Such discrimination may sound familiar. Perhaps you have faced bias too—in your office, in the streets, in recreation centers, or even in government policies. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin is a global problem. Propagandists in the guise of politicians rouse people's fear and insecurity: "These outsiders will take your job, your land, your wealth." And they offer the people shelter with slogans like "Our land for our people!" But while supposedly promoting the social good, more often than not they hide their selfish interests for power, prestige, and control.

The desire to live in a close group seems natural. We seek security and shelter and seem to find them in a cohort of people like ourselves. But this tendency degrades to hostile attitudes, tension between nations, misconceived racial superiority, religious fanaticism, global terrorism, and war.

Ancient Wisdom Shows the Way

What makes me think someone is related to me? Generally it is birth in a common land, caste, race, family, or religion, or likeness in ideology or belief. The *Bhagavad-gītā* states that identifying ourselves with our physical and mental attributes is an incomplete understanding. Our real identity is that we are spirit souls, parts of God, Kṛṣṇa, the universal father.

Unaware of our real spiritual identity, we think, "I'm a man" or "I'm Indian" or "I'm a housewife" or "I'm a rich woman" or "I'm a *brāhmaṇa.*" And we think everything related to our body is ours—our relatives, our house, our caste, our nation. This network of illusion expands and completely entwines our thinking power. In this bound stage we can think only of "mine" and "yours." Such thinking triggers discrimination. Anyone who does not fit into our designation of "mine" warrants our indifference or hate.

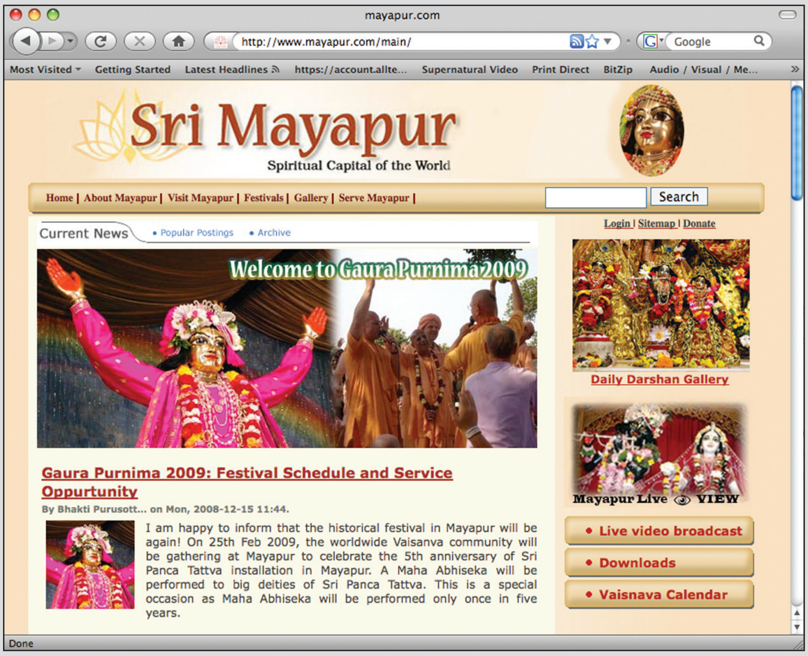
But when we understand that we are spirit souls and God is the original father of all living entities, we can identify with a fellow being as our brother or sister. The distinctions based on physical, cultural, and other differences melt away, and a new relationship centered on pleasing Kṛṣṇa evolves.

The Vedic text *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* (Mantra 1) states:

(*please turn to page 24*)

e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites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Gaura Purnima 2009: Festival Schedule and Service Oppurtunity

By Bhakti Purusott... on Mon, 2008-12-15 11:44.

I am happy to inform that the historical festival in Mayapur will be again! On 25th Feb 2009, the worldwide Vaisanva community will be gathering at Mayapur to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Sri Panca Tattva installation in Mayapur. A Maha Abhiseka will be performed to big deities of Sri Panca Tattva. This is a special occasion as Maha Abhiseka will be performed only once in five years.

Temple Websites—Devotees all over the world have taken advantage of the Internet to create beautiful websites for ISKCON temples. These websites not only advertise the existence of Kṛṣṇa's temples, but they also describe the weekly programs, upcoming festivals, and the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In some temples, video cameras upload live images of all the activities carried out before the deities. You can log on and watch live lectures, *kīrtanas,* dramas, and more.

For a taste, visit these two great websites in India: Sri Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir and ISKCON Chowpatty.

Sri Mayapur

No matter where you are, if you have access to the Internet you can arrive at once in Sri Mayapur, the spiritual capital of the world. The Sri Mayapur website provides live pictures from within ISKCON's Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, from early morning to evening.

The photo gallery on the website opens up the whole Mayapur complex to your computer, with pictures of the surrounding campus for you to download and enjoy. Read about the history of the temple and the installation of the beautiful deities, including the incredible life-size Śrī Pañca Tattva.

To visit Sri Mayapur, go to **www.mayapur.com/main**.

ISKCON Chowpatty

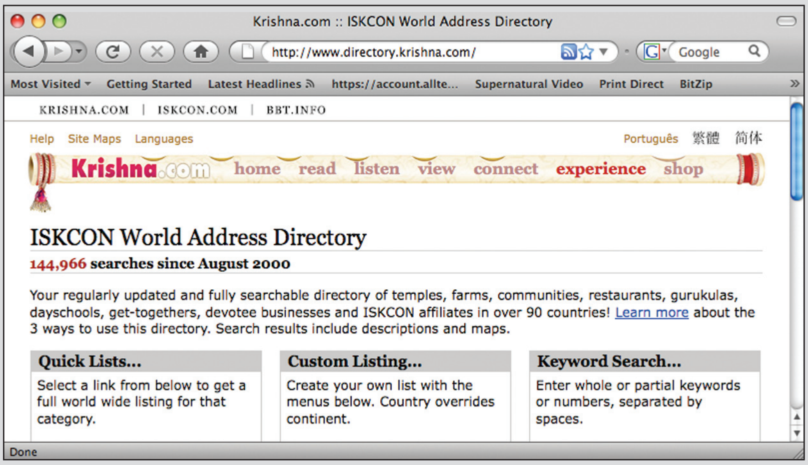
The ISKCON temple in Chowpatty, Mumbai, is dedicated to Śrī Rādhā Gopīnātha, and so is the website. Click on "Daily Darshan" to see photographs of Their Lordships from every day in the past year. Click on "Audio Tour" and be transported to the "ISKCON Desire Tree Multimedia" portal. Here you can download a stunning variety of videos and e-books and choose from a selection of more than eighteen thousand lectures and *kīrtanas.*

To visit the Chowpatty temple, go to **www.radhagopinath.com**.

Krishna.com Directory

You can find more websites for ISKCON temples by searching the directory at **www.directory.Krishna.com**. With a few clicks, you can visit temples all over the world or locate the closest temple, *prasādam* restaurant, or Hare Kṛṣṇa farm.

—*Antony Brennan*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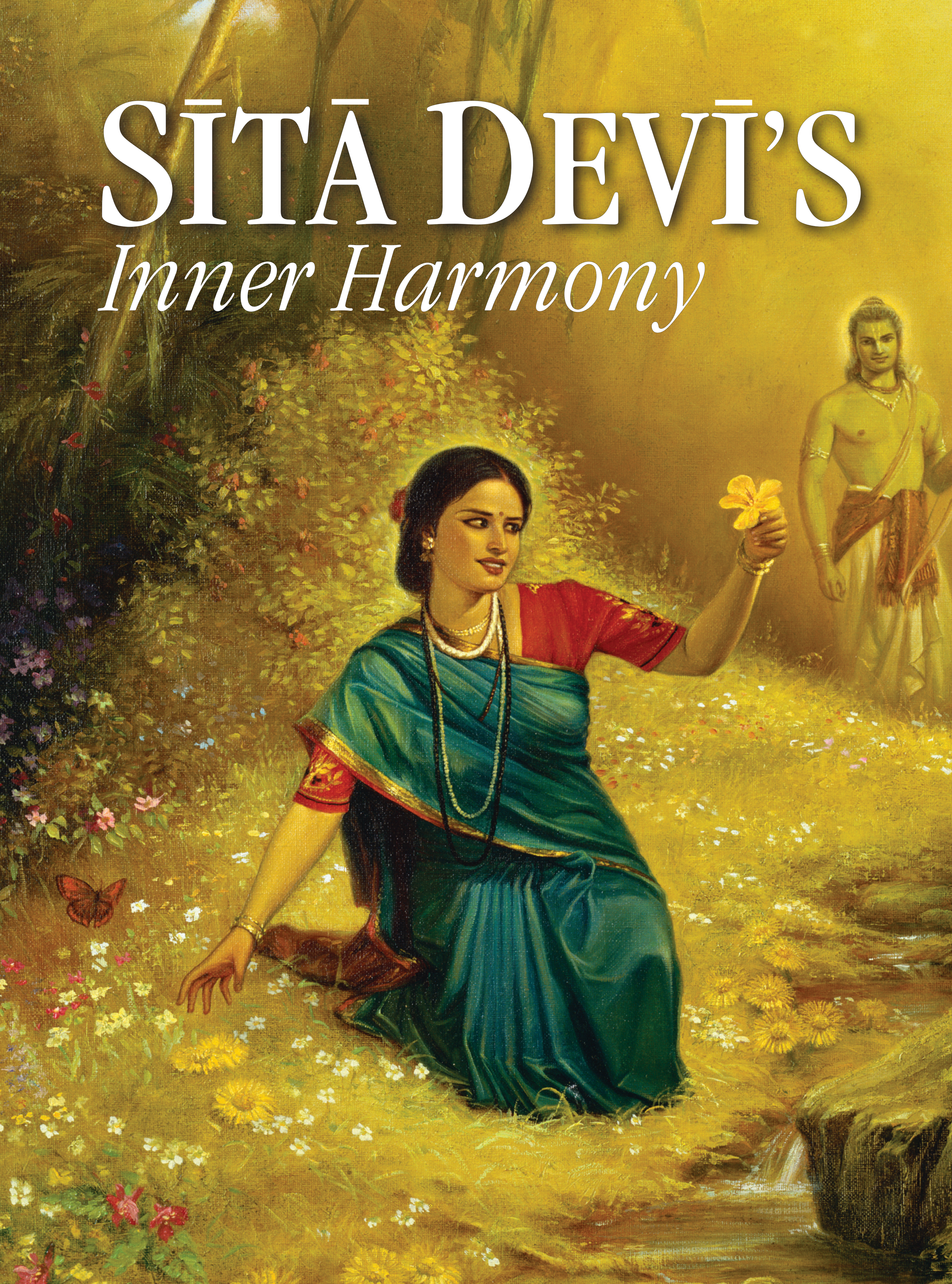
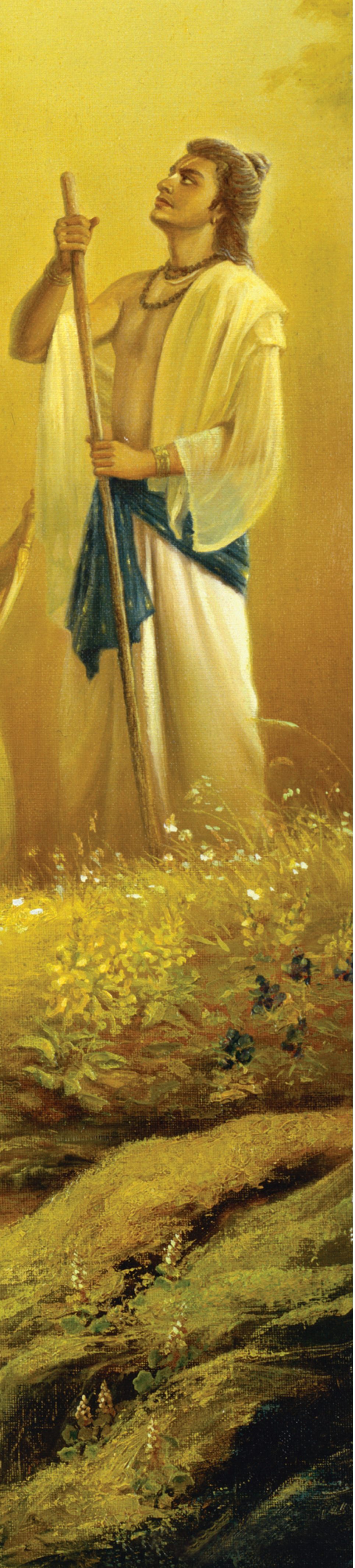
SĪTĀ DEVĪ'S

Inner Harmony





Painting by Dina Bandhu Dāsa

In the face of extreme hardship, Lord Rāmacandra's queen reveals her extraordinary character, founded on her pure devotion to the Lord.

by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

THE EPIC *Rāmāyaṇa,* written by the sage Vālmīki, tells the story of Lord Rāmacandra, Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as the perfect king. Lord Rāma's wife, queen, and eternal consort is Sītā Devī. She is also the ideal devotee.

Sītā Devī's example shows that one who acts according to God's desire is peaceful and has harmonious relationships, regardless of circumstances. Sītā Devī exhibits her inner harmony throughout her ordeal, whether she's hearing of her husband's fourteen-year banishment to the forest, being abducted and imprisoned by Rāvaṇa, or being reunited with Lord Rāma.

Sītā Follows Her Conscience

In the *Rāmāyaṇa,* Sītā Devī first clearly expresses her own will by disobeying Lord Rāma, who wants her to stay behind when He leaves for His exile to the forest. She decides that to be with Rāma in all circumstances is her sacred duty. The unequivocal voice of her conscience will not allow her to do otherwise. By insisting on going with her husband to the forest, Sītā defines for herself what a devoted wife is.

To convince Rāma to allow her to go with Him, Sītā says, "Every day I will serve You and practice self-discipline. I too will live on fruits and nuts and will not interfere with Your austerities. Taking shelter in Your arms, O Rāma, I will become fearless."

Rāma replies, "O frail lady, in the forest wild beasts will lurk on all sides, waiting to attack, and we will have to sleep on the bare ground with scorpions, worms, mosquitoes, and gnats as constant nuisances. Abandon this idea of coming with Me. If you are truly devoted to Me, you will follow My instructions."

"O Rāma," Sītā says, "all these hardships will seem like blessings to me. If You protect me, I can tolerate anything."

Seeing her determination, Rāma finally agrees with her decision. On His request, Sītā gives all her valuable possessions to the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas, and she and Rāma go to the forest with Lakṣmaṇa.

Despite the uncomfortable circumstances, Sītā is peaceful. She has followed her pure interior directive, choosing wilderness over civilization, simplicity over opulence, austerity over luxury, and the satisfaction of following her conscience over the distress of being separated from Śrī Rāma.

Sītā's Harmony with The Earth and Living Beings

"I shall remain happy by gazing at the hills, lakes, and rivers," Sītā says when convincing Rāma to allow her to accompany Him.

The natural beauty of forest life delights Sītā, and she feels so

This article was adapted from a talk given at last year's Vaishnavi Retreat in New Vrindavan, West Virginia. This year's retreat will be held October 9–11. For information, visit vaishnaviretreat.org.

Exiled to the forest, Lord Rāmacandra is accompanied by His brother Lakṣmaṇa and His wife, Sītā, who has convinced Him of her duty to go with Him.

cheerful and at home there that she seems to prefer it to the complexities of the city. Her silks and gold are gone. She has given up her palace bed—“as soft and white as milk foam”—to sleep on fallen leaves. And she no longer dines on a variety of delicious foods but on forest fruits and nuts and greens. Still, she has no regrets.

Forest life reveals that Sītā has a special connection with the earth, the rivers, and the animals. When the transcendental couple is first crossing the Ganges, at midstream Sītā joins her hands in prayer:

“O Mother Gaṅgā, please protect Śrī Rāma on all sides. May He pass these fourteen years without harm.”

Sītā’s resistance to Rāvaṇa’s obsession drains him of the powers he won through asceticism.

When Rāvaṇa abducts Sītā, she is spirited and clever, although desperate. She calls out to her allies in the natural world—the trees, the river, the birds, and the animals—begging them to help her and to inform Rāma of her abduction. Unable to help, the trees shed tears in the form of sap, and the lions, deer, and elephants are heartbroken. Sītā wakes the old sleeping bird Jatāyu and drops her jewels to the monkeys who will later assist Lord Rāma.

In Lanka, Rāvaṇa thinks that by speaking of his love for Sītā, she will soon be won over.

Ever fearless, however, Sītā tells him, “My heart is devoted to Rāma without deviation, and to Rāma alone. Why should I, a swan sporting with her mate within a lotus-filled lake, prefer a duck meandering on the shore? You can do whatever you like to me, but rest assured that because of your vile and sinful lust, you will soon meet with death at Rāma’s hands.”

Raging with fury, Rāvaṇa gives her twelve months to surrender to him and sends her to a grove of *ashoka* trees, where cruel, hideous women torture her.

Over the twelve months of Sītā’s captivity, Rāvaṇa grows increasingly desperate and irrational in his frustrated lust. But even though an ordinary person in Sītā’s unkempt condition would be weak and miserable, she grows stronger and more thoughtful. The flexibility with which she adjusted to changing situations in the forest has given way to an inflexible resistance to the terror of Rāvaṇa and his guards.

When Rāvaṇa again entreats Sītā, she places a straw between herself and him as a symbol of her unwillingness to contact him directly.

“You should withdraw your mind from me,” she says, “and remain content with the numerous consorts you already possess. You will never be able to have me. I shall never do anything contrary to righteousness, and so there is no hope of your ever gaining my favor.”

She then turns her back to Rāvaṇa.

“Give up your futile hope,” she tells him. “You no more deserve me than a sinful man deserves perfection. . . . Because you are acting perversely, directing yourself away from the path of virtue, you will soon become the cause of the destruction of your entire kingdom. I will never be tempted by your offers of insignificant opulence and royal comforts because I am undivided in my devotion to Rāma. . . . I am as inseparable from Rāma as sunlight is from the sun.”

Although apparently helpless and grief stricken, Sītā wins the sympathy of some of the other women Rāvaṇa has abducted. In Rāvaṇa’s absence, they comfort Sītā. Also, several of the guards, most notably Trijātā, respect and befriend Sītā. They instruct the other guards to beg Sītā’s forgiveness. Saramā, the wife of Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvaṇa’s virtuous brother, also becomes sympathetic to Sītā, won over by her virtue.

When Hanumān arrives and offers to carry Sītā on his back across the ocean, Sītā, ever conscious of proper behavior, says, “I have vowed never to touch the body of any man other than Rāma. I am already mortified due to being grasped by the sinful Rāvaṇa. I could not voluntarily touch another man. Nor could I allow anyone other than Rāma to rescue me, thereby diminishing Rāma’s fame. I therefore prefer to wait for my lord, confident that He will soon arrive.”

Hanumān assents to Sītā’s request, respecting the incomparable chastity for which she is famous.

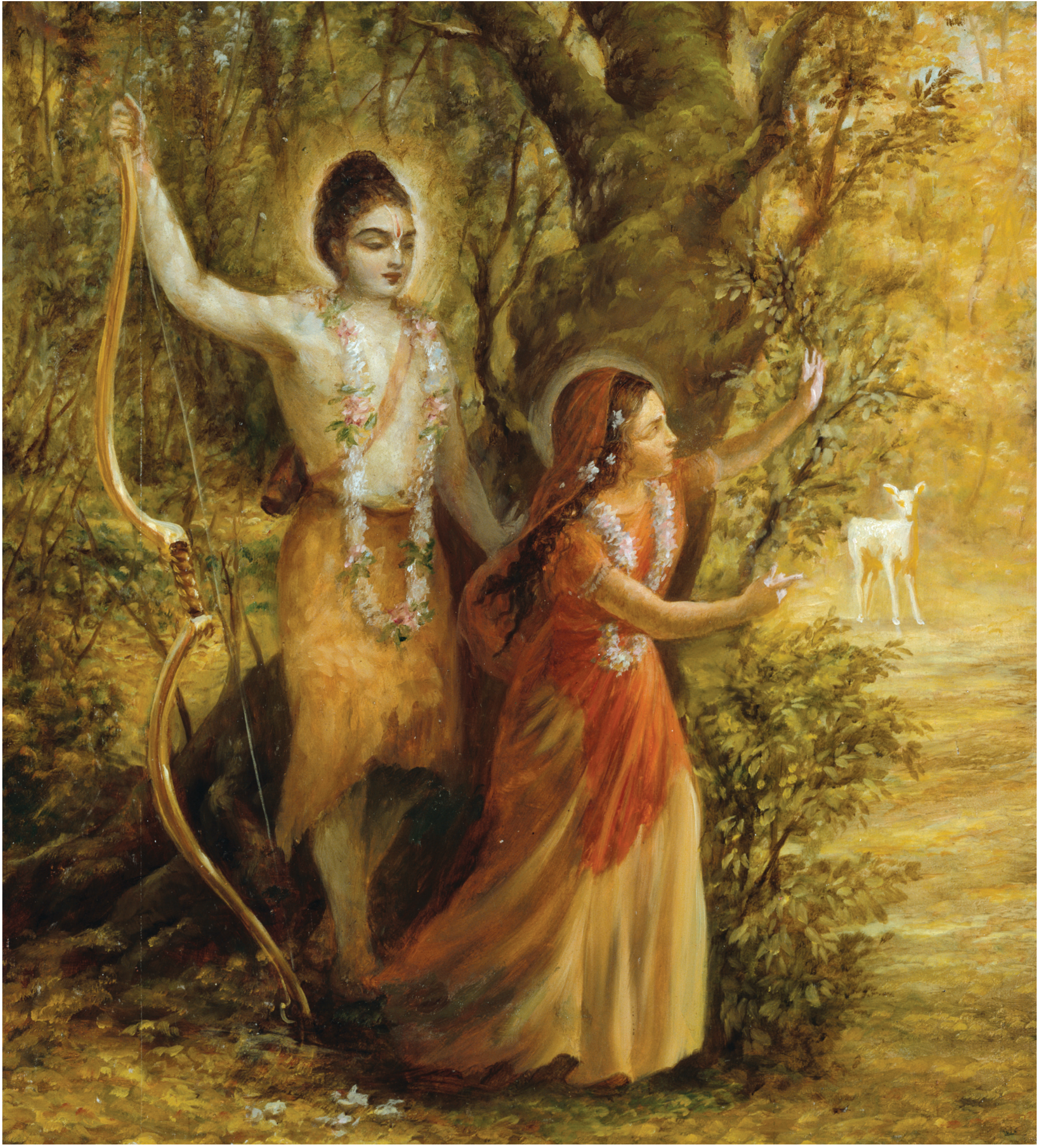
The Source of Sītā’s Harmony

Always thinking of Rāma within her heart, Sītā constantly seeks to reunite with Him. Her commitment to Him and her constant meditation on Him protect her and give her the strength to resist Rāvaṇa’s many advances and allurements. Although Rāvaṇa delivers more offers and more threats, Sītā’s fixed faith and conviction transform her: She grows in strength and calls upon powers she has never used before.

“I would burn you to ashes myself by the power of my asceticism and chastity,” Sītā tells Rāvaṇa, “but I do not have my lord’s order. Nor do I wish to waste my ascetic merits on such a wretch as you.”

Sītā resistance to Rāvaṇa’s obsession drains him of the powers he won through asceticism. “Thus the soldiers of Lord Rāmacandra killed Rāvaṇa’s soldiers, who had lost all good fortune because Rāvaṇa had been condemned by the anger of mother Sītā.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.10.20)

After Rāvaṇa’s death, his wife Mandodarī says to his stricken body, “O greatly fortunate one, you came under the influence of lusty desires,


Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa and Dhṛti Devī Dāsī

To please Sītā Devī, Lord Rāmacandra leaves her side to bring her a golden deer. The deer is actually a disguised associate of Rāvaṇa, who kidnaps Sītā in Rāma's absence.

and therefore you could not understand the influence of mother Sītā. Now, because of her curse, you have been reduced to this state, having been killed by Lord Rāmacandra." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.10.27)

Three Qualities of Sītā Devī Reveal Her Inner Harmony

Sītā's forgiveness: After Rāvaṇa's death, Hanumān comes to Sītā in the *ashoka* grove and, before taking her to Rāma, offers to kill the female guards who have tormented her for so many months.

In accord with Her noble character, Sītā is ever kind to the downtrodden.

"These guards," she says, "were simply carrying out Rāvaṇa's order. No blame should be attached to them. Any suffering I felt was surely the result of my own past misdeeds, for such is the universal law. Indeed, there is an ancient maxim that is always the code of the virtuous: 'A righteous person does not consider the offenses of others. At all costs that person always observes the vow of not returning evil for evil, for the virtuous consider good conduct their ornament.'"

Sītā Devī also says that compassion should always be shown toward sinners, for no one was ever found to be free of sin.

Sītā's openheartedness: As Sītā, Rāma, and their soldiers are returning to Ayodhya, they reach Kishkindha, the home of the monkey warriors who assisted Rāma in defeating Rāvaṇa.

Sītā says, "I would be pleased if I could return to Ayodhya in the company of all the wives of the monkey chiefs."

Rāma stops the chariot, the monkeys quickly get their wives, and when everyone has returned and is seated, they continue on their way.

Sītā's gratitude: After the coronation of Sītā-Rāma, Sītā wants to give Hanumān something as a token of her appreciation for all that he did for her. She unclasps the necklace that Rāma has given her and then looks at Him. Understanding her intention, Rāma asks her to give the necklace to Hanumān, and she happily places it around his neck.

Evidence of Sītā's Unconditional Love

In the pastimes of Sītā Devī we see the beauty of her character in contrast to the ugliness of the palace politics that drives her and Rāma into exile; we witness how her love for Rāma supersedes His duty to her; we see her graceful flexibility in accepting the austerities of the wilderness; we feel her fear of Rāvaṇa and admire her intelligence in opposing him; we find her steadfast and patient as Rāvaṇa's captive; we see her virtue winning even her vicious guards to her side; we see her ferocious anger toward Rāvaṇa soothed by her constant meditation on Rāma; we discover that her austerities under the *ashoka* tree make her not hardhearted but compassionate. All these experiences are harmonized by her unadulterated, unconditional love for Śrī Rāmacandra.

"I know of her undivided love for Me," said Lord Rāma. "Indeed, guarded as she is by her own moral power, Rāvaṇa could not have violated Sītā."

Mahārāja Daśaratha, Sītā's father-in-law, once told her, "Your remarkable behavior will earn you a place in history as the most glorious woman the world has ever seen."

Viśākhā Devī Dāsī has been contributing articles and photographs to BTG for more than thirty years. She and her husband have lived at Saranagati Village, a Hare Kṛṣṇa community in British Columbia, Canada, since 1999.

MY LAND, MY PEOPLE

(*continued from page 18*)

īśāvāsyam idam sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā
mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam

"Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong."

When we consider God the owner of everything and are satisfied with what we need, we will be happy that others share in what He provides. Poverty results from greed, when a few exploit many. A simple life of satisfaction and sharing holds the key to mitigating poverty. As the invocation of *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* states: "The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. . . . " We can be assured that since God is perfect, His arrangements to care for the inhabitants of this world are also perfect. A child of God has no need to fear.

By accepting these spiritual principles, we find our hearts free from the narrow-minded concerns of politics. Hatred, tensions, and differences cease to bother us. A spirit of love and caring for our brethren bathes our motives and guides our actions. We can then easily identify with the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.84.13):

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape
tridhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma
ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

"A human being who identifies this body made of three elements with his self, who considers the by-products of the body to be his kinsmen, who considers the land of birth worshipable, and who goes to the place of pilgrimage simply to take a bath rather than meet men of transcendental knowledge there, is to be considered like an ass or a cow."

A Spiritual Attachment

Attachment for the land that supports us and for the people we relate to is a natural human tendency. Can we spiritualize this need? Yes, and the answer lies in finding a spiritual connection with God. If we want to be attached to some person, let it be Lord Kṛṣṇa and not some hero of this world with his flickering charms. If we want to be attached to some land, let it not be our motherland but the holy land of Vṛndāvana. This spiritual attachment will not only bring sanctity to our contaminated and hateful hearts, but also liberate us from the fetters of this miserable material life. ISKCON centers illustrate how members of different races and nationalities can unite in their service to the supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

The world would improve without politicians who split us. Even greater gains would come when, by making Kṛṣṇa the heart of our lives, we develop bonds of fraternity that supersede all our sectarian differences. Finally, the world will be the best it can be when we will reunite with Kṛṣṇa, our original father, and Vṛndāvana, our real homeland.

BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

HOW TO WORSHIP THE LORD

Nārada Muni instructs his disciple Dhruva Mahārāja on how to worship the Lord while living in the forest.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 8

55 सलिलैः शुचिभिर्माल्यैर्वन्यैर्मूलफलादिभिः
शस्ताङ्कुरांशुकैश्चार्चेत्तुलस्या प्रियया प्रभुम्

salilaiḥ śucibhir mālyair
vanyair mūla-phalādibhiḥ
śastāṅkurāṁśukaiś cārcet
tulasyā priyayā prabhum

salilaiḥ—by use of water; *śucibhiḥ*—being purified; *mālyaiḥ*—by garlands; *vanyaiḥ*—of forest flowers; *mūla*—roots; *phala-ādibhiḥ*—by different kinds of vegetables and fruits; *śasta*—the newly grown grass; *aṅkura*—buds; *aṁśukaiḥ*—by the skin of trees, such as the *bhūrja; ca*—and; *arcet*—should worship; *tulasyā*—by the *tulasī* leaves; *priyayā*—which are very dear to the Lord; *prabhum*—the Lord.

One should worship the Lord by offering pure water, pure flower garlands, fruits, flowers, and vegetables, which are available in the forest, or by collecting newly grown grasses, small buds of flowers, or even the skins of trees, and if possible, by offering tulasī leaves, which are very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT: It is specifically mentioned herein that *tulasī* leaves are very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and devotees should take particular care to have *tulasī* leaves in every temple and center of worship. In the Western countries, while engaged in propagating the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we were brought great unhappiness because we could not find *tulasī* leaves. We are very much obliged, therefore, to our disciple Śrīmatī Govinda Dāsī because she has taken much care to grow *tulasī* plants from seeds, and she has been successful by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Now *tulasī* plants are growing in almost every center of our movement. *Tulasī* leaves are very important in the method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In this verse the word *salilaiḥ* means "by the water." ① Of course, Dhruva Mahārāja was worshiping on the

(1) On the bank of which river was Dhruva Mahārāja worshiping the Lord?

bank of the Yamunā. The Yamunā and the Ganges are sacred, and sometimes devotees in India insist that the deity must be worshiped with water of the Ganges or Yamunā. But here we understand *deśa-kāla* to mean "according to time and country." In the Western countries there is no River Yamunā or Ganges—water from such sacred rivers is not available. Does this mean that the *arcā* worship should for that reason be stopped? No. *Salilaiḥ* refers to any water—whatever is available—but it must be very clear and collected purely. That water can be used. The other paraphernalia, such as flower garlands, fruits, and vegetables, should be collected according to the country and according to their availability.

Tulasī leaves are very important for satisfying the Lord, so as far as possible an arrangement should be made for growing *tulasī* leaves. Dhruva Mahārāja was advised to worship the Lord with the fruits and flowers available in the forest. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa frankly says that He accepts vegetables, fruits, flowers, etc. One should not offer Lord Vāsudeva anything other than what is prescribed herein by the great authority Nārada Muni. One cannot offer to the deity according to one's whims; since these fruits and vegetables are available anywhere in the universe, we should observe this small point very attentively.

56 लब्ध्वा द्रव्यमयीमर्चां क्षित्यम्ब्वादिषु वार्चयेत्
आभृतात्मा मुनिः शान्तो यतवाङ्मितवन्यभुक्

labdhvā dravyamayīm arcāṁ
kṣity-ambv-ādiṣu vārcayet
ābhṛtātmā muniḥ śānto
yata-vāṅ mita-vanya-bhuk

labdhvā—by getting; *dravya-mayīm*—made of physical elements; *arcām*—worshipable deity; *kṣiti*—earth; *ambu*—water; *ādiṣu*—beginning with; *vā*—or; *arcayet*—worship; *ābhṛta-ātmā*—one who is fully self-controlled; *muniḥ*—a great personality; *śāntaḥ*—peacefully; *yata-vāk*—controlling the force of talking; *mita*—frugal; *vanya-bhuk*—eating whatever is available in the forest.

It is possible to worship a form of the Lord made of physical elements such as earth, water, pulp, wood, and metal. In the forest one can make a form with no more than earth and water and worship Him according to the above principles. A devotee who has full control over his self should be very sober and peaceful and must be satisfied simply with eating whatever fruits and vegetables are available in the forest.

(2) Besides chanting, what other method of worshiping the Lord is essential for a devotee?
(3) What kind of form of the Lord was Dhruva advised to worship in the forest?

PURPORT: ② It is essential for a devotee to worship the form of the Lord and not only meditate upon the form of the Lord within his mind with the chanting of the mantra given by the spiritual master. The worship of the form must be present. The impersonalist takes unnecessary trouble to meditate upon or worship something impersonal, and the path is very precarious. We are not advised to follow the impersonalist way of meditating on or worshiping the Lord. ③ Dhruva Mahārāja was advised to worship a form made of earth and water because in the jungle, if it is not possible to have a form made of metal, wood, or stone, the best process is to take earth mixed with water and make a form of the Lord and worship Him. The devotee should not be anxious about cooking food; whatever is available in the forest or in the city among the fruit and vegetable groups should be offered to the deity, and the devotee should be satisfied eating that. He should not be anxious to have very palatable dishes. Of course, wherever it is possible, one should offer the deities the best foodstuffs, prepared within the category of fruits and vegetables, cooked or uncooked. The important factor is that the devotee should be regulated (*mita-bhuk*); that is one of the good qualifications of a devotee. He should not hanker to satisfy the tongue with a particular kind of foodstuff. He should be satisfied to eat whatever *prasāda* is available by the grace of the Lord.

57 स्वेच्छावतारचरितैरचिन्त्यनिजमायया
करिष्यत्युत्तमश्लोकस्तद् ध्यायेद्धृदयङ्गमम्

svecchāvatāra-caritair
acintya-nija-māyayā
kariṣyaty uttamaślokas
tad dhyāyed dhṛdayaṅ-gamam

sva-icchā—by His own supreme will; *avatāra*—incarnation; *caritaiḥ*—activities; *acintya*—inconceivable; *nija-māyayā*—by His own potency; *kariṣyati*—performs; *uttama-ślokaḥ*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *tat*—that; *dhyāyet*—one should meditate; *hṛdayam-gamam*—very attractive.

My dear Dhruva, besides worshiping the deity and chanting the mantra three times a day, you should meditate upon the transcendental activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His different incarnations, as exhibited by His supreme will and personal potencies.

PURPORT: Devotional service comprises nine prescribed practices—hearing, chanting, remembering, worshiping, serving, offering everything to the deity, etc. Here Dhruva Mahārāja is advised not only to meditate on the form of the Lord, but to think of His transcendental pastimes in His different incarnations.

Māyāvādī philosophers take the incarnation of the Lord to be in the same category as the ordinary living entity. This is a great mistake. The incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not forced to act by the material laws of nature. The word *svecchā* is used here to indicate that He appears out of His supreme will. The conditioned soul is forced to accept a particular type of body according to his karma given by the laws of material nature under the direction of the Supreme Lord. ④ But when the Lord appears, He is not forced by the dictation of material nature; He appears as He likes by His own internal potency. That is the difference.

⑤ The conditioned soul accepts a particular type of body, such as the body of a hog, by his work and by the superior authority of material nature. But when Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in the incarnation of a boar, He is not the same kind of hog as an ordinary animal. Kṛṣṇa appears as Varāha-avatāra in an expansive feature which cannot be compared to an ordinary hog's. His appearance and disappearance are inconceivable to us. ⑥ In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly said that He appears by His own internal potency for the protection of the devotees and the annihilation of the nondevotees.

A devotee should always consider that Kṛṣṇa does not appear as an ordinary human being or ordinary beast; His appearance as Varāha-mūrti or a horse or tortoise is an exhibition of His internal potency. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is said, *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhiḥ:* one should not mistake the appearance of the Lord as a human being or a beast to be the same as the birth of an ordinary conditioned soul, who is forced to appear by the laws of nature, whether as an animal, as a human being or as a demigod. This kind of thinking is offensive. ⑦ Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has condemned the Māyāvādīs as offensive to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because of their thinking that the Lord and the conditioned living entities are one and the same.

Nārada advises Dhruva to meditate on the pastimes of the Lord, which is as good as the meditation of concentrating one's mind on the form of the Lord. As meditation on any form of the Lord is valuable, so is chanting of different names of the Lord, such as Hari, Govinda, and Nārāyaṇa. But in this age we are especially advised to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra as enunciated in the *śāstra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

58 परिचर्या भगवतो यावत्यः पूर्वसेविताः
ता मन्त्रहृदयेनैव प्रयुंज्यान्मन्त्रमूर्तये

paricaryā bhagavato
yāvatyaḥ pūrva-sevitāḥ
tā mantra-hṛdayenaiva
prayuñjyān mantra-mūrtaye

paricaryāḥ—service; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *yāvatyaḥ*—as they are prescribed (as above mentioned); *pūrva-sevitāḥ*—recommended or done by previous *ācāryas*; *tāḥ*—that; *mantra*—hymns; *hṛdayena*—within the heart; *eva*—certainly; *prayuñjyāt*—one should worship; *mantra-mūrtaye*—who is nondifferent from the mantra.

One should follow in the footsteps of previous devotees regarding how to worship the Supreme Lord with the prescribed paraphernalia, or one should offer worship within the heart by reciting the mantra to the Personality of Godhead, who is nondifferent from the mantra.

PURPORT: It is recommended here that even if one cannot arrange to worship the forms of the Lord with all recommended paraphernalia, one can simply think about the form of the Lord and mentally offer everything recommended in the *śāstras,* including flowers, *candana* pulp, conchshell, umbrella, fan, and *cāmara.* One can meditate upon offering and chant the twelve-syllable mantra *oṁ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya.* Since the mantra and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are nondifferent, one can worship the form of the Lord with the mantra in the absence of physical paraphernalia. The story of the *brāhmaṇa* who worshiped the Lord within his mind, as related in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* or *The Nectar of Devotion,* should be consulted in this connection. ⑧ If paraphernalia is not present physically, one can think of the items and offer them to the deity by chanting the mantra. Such are the liberal and potent facilities in the process of devotional service.

59 एवं कायेन मनसा वचसा च मनोगतम्
परिचर्यमाणो भगवान् भक्तिमत्परिचर्यया
60 पुंसाममायिनां सम्यग्भजतां भाववर्धनः
श्रेयो दिशत्यभिमतं यद्धर्मादिषु देहिनाम्

evaṁ kāyena manasā
vacasā ca mano-gatam
paricaryamāṇo bhagavān
bhaktimat-paricaryayā

(4) What differentiates the Lord's appearance in this world from the conditioned soul's acceptance of a material body?
(5) What are two factors that determine which body a conditioned soul accepts?
(6) What are two main reasons for the Lord's appearance in this world?
(7) Why has Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu condemned the Māyāvādīs as offensive to the Supreme Personality of Godhead?
(8) How can one worship the deity without the required paraphernalia?

puṁsām amāyināṁ samyag
bhajatāṁ bhāva-vardhanaḥ
śreyo diśaty abhimataṁ
yad dharmādiṣu dehinām

evam—thus; *kāyena*—by the body; *manasā*—by the mind; *vacasā*—by the words; *ca*—also; *manaḥ-gatam*—simply by thinking of the Lord; *paricaryamāṇaḥ*—engaged in the devotional service; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *bhakti-mat*—according to the regulative principles of devotional service; *paricaryayā*—by worshiping the Lord; *puṁsām*—of the devotee; *amāyinām*—who is sincere and serious; *samyak*—perfectly; *bhajatām*—engaged in devotional service; *bhāva-vardhanaḥ*—the Lord, who increases the ecstasy of the devotee; *śreyaḥ*—ultimate goal; *diśati*—bestows; *abhimatam*—desire; *yat*—as they are; *dharma-ādiṣu*—regarding spiritual life and economic development; *dehinām*—of the conditioned souls.

Anyone who thus engages in the devotional service of the Lord, seriously and sincerely, with his mind, words, and body, and who is fixed in the activities of the prescribed devotional methods, is blessed by the Lord according to his desire. If a devotee desires material religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, or liberation from the material world, he is awarded these results.

PURPORT: Devotional service is so potent that one who renders devotional service can receive whatever he likes as a benediction from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The conditioned souls are very much attached to the material world, and thus by performing religious rites they want the material benefits known as dharma and *artha.*

61 विरक्तश्चेन्द्रियरतौ भक्तियोगेन भूयसा
तं निरन्तरभावेन भजेताद्धा विमुक्तये

viraktaś cendriya-ratau
bhakti-yogena bhūyasā
taṁ nirantara-bhāvena
bhajetāddhā vimuktaye

viraktaḥ ca—completely renounced order of life; *indriya-ratau*—in the matter of sense gratification; *bhakti-yogena*—by the process of devotional service; *bhūyasā*—with great seriousness; *tam*—unto Him (the Supreme); *nirantara*—constantly, twenty-four hours daily; *bhāvena*—in the topmost stage of ecstasy; *bhajeta*—must worship; *addhā*—directly; *vimuktaye*—for liberation.

If one is very serious about liberation, he must stick to the process of transcendental loving service, engaging twenty-four hours a day in the highest stage of ecstasy, and he must certainly be aloof from all activities of sense gratification.

PURPORT: There are different stages of perfection according to different persons' objectives. ⑨ Generally people are *karmīs,* for they engage in activities of sense gratification. Above the *karmīs* are the *jñānīs,* who are trying to become liberated from material entanglement. Yogis are still more advanced because they meditate on the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And above all these are the devotees, who simply engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord; they are situated seriously on the topmost platform of ecstasy.

Here Dhruva Mahārāja is advised that if he has no desire for sense gratification, then he should directly engage himself in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The path of *apavarga,* or liberation, begins from the stage called *mokṣa.* In this verse the word *vimuktaye,* "for liberation," is especially mentioned. If one wants to he happy within this material world, he may aspire to go to the different material planetary systems where there is a higher standard of sense gratification, but real *mokṣa,* or liberation, is performed without any such desire. This is explained in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by the term *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam,* "without desire for material sense gratification."

For persons who are still inclined to enjoy material life in different stages or on different planets, the stage of liberation in *bhakti-yoga* is not recommended. Only persons who are completely free from the contamination of sense gratification can execute *bhakti-yoga,* or the process of devotional service, very purely. The activities on the path of *apavarga* up to the stages of dharma, *artha,* and *kāma* are meant for sense gratification, but when one comes to the stage of *mokṣa,* the impersonalist liberation, the practitioner wants to merge into the existence of the Supreme. But that is also sense gratification. ⑩ When one goes above the stage of liberation, however, he at once becomes one of the associates of the Lord to render transcendental loving service. That is technically called *vimukti.* For this specific *vimukti* liberation, Nārada Muni recommends that one directly engage himself in devotional service.

(9) What are the respective objectives of the *karmīs, jñānīs,* yogis, and devotees?
(10) What is *vimukti,* the stage above liberation?

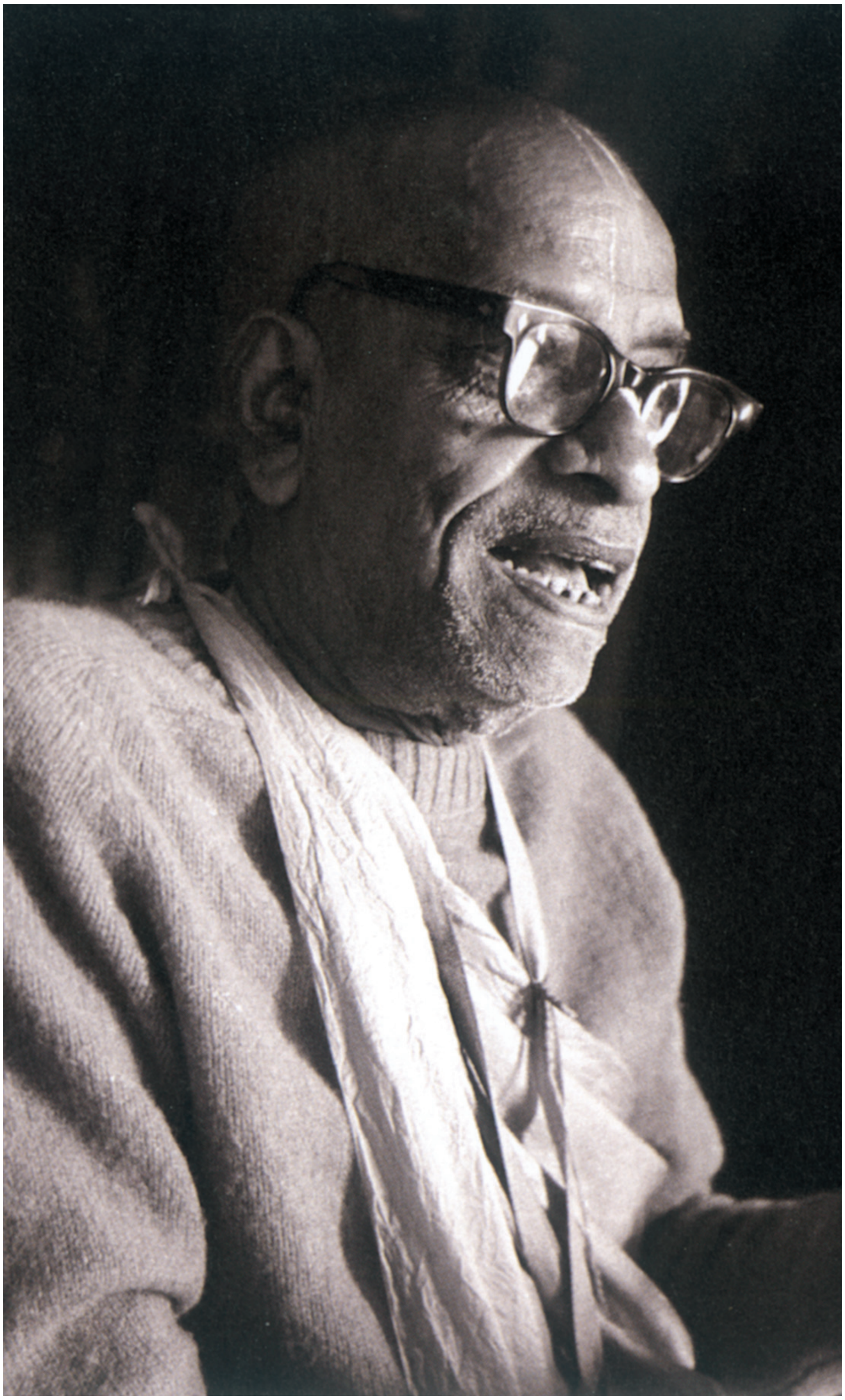
62 इत्युक्तस्तं परिक्रम्य प्रणम्य च नृपार्भकः
ययौ मधुवनं पुण्यं हरेश्चरणचर्चितम्

ity uktas taṁ parikramya
praṇamya ca nṛpārbhakaḥ
yayau madhuvanaṁ puṇyaṁ
hareś caraṇa-carcitam

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Forced to Bow Down



The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a guest took place in September 1968 at the Seattle Kṛṣṇa center.

Guest: Can you explain subordination?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Subordination? Yes, it is simple. Everyone must be subordinate to somebody else. Are you not subordinate to somebody?

Guest: Yes, in a material sense. But in the spiritual sense, I don't feel subordinate to anyone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: When you understand what spiritual life is, you will see that in the spiritual sense also you are subordinate, because your nature is to be subordinate. What do you mean by spiritual and material?

Guest: Well, for example, at my job I'm subordinate to my boss, but in my real being, my spiritual being, I don't feel I am subordinate to my boss or anyone else. In other words, I don't feel that I have to bow down to anybody, and I don't feel that anybody has to bow down to me.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why do you not want to bow down?

Guest: Because I don't feel that I owe anyone anything, or that anyone owes me anything.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So, this is the material disease. We are forced to bow down, yet we think that we do not have to bow down. This is the disease.

Guest: No one can force me to bow down.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Just try to understand. You say that you do not want to bow down—is that right?

Guest: That's basically true, yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why?

Guest: Because I don't feel that I'm inferior to anyone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is the disease of material existence. You have diagnosed your own disease. Everyone is thinking, "I want to be the master. I don't wish to bow down." Everyone is thinking like this. This is not only your disease; everyone has this diseased mentality: "Why shall I bow down? Why shall I become subordinate?" But nature is forcing me to become subordinate. Now, why are people dying? Can you answer this question?

Guest: Why are people dying?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, nobody wants to die, yet everyone is dying. Why?

Guest: Well, death is biologically determined.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That means biological force! You are subordinate to biology. Then why do you say that you are independent?

Guest: Well, I feel that I am.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You are feeling wrongly. That is my point. You are subordinate, and you must bow down to biological force. When death comes, you can't say, "Oh, I don't obey you." Therefore, you are subordinate.

Guest: I am subordinate to God, yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, forget God for now. God is far away. Now we are speaking of the material nature. Just try to understand that although you do not want to die, you are forced to die because you are subordinate.

Guest: Oh, yes, that makes sense.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then you understand your position—that you are subordinate. You cannot declare, "I am free; I am not subordinate." If you are thinking that you don't wish to be subordinate, that you don't have to bow down, then you are diseased.

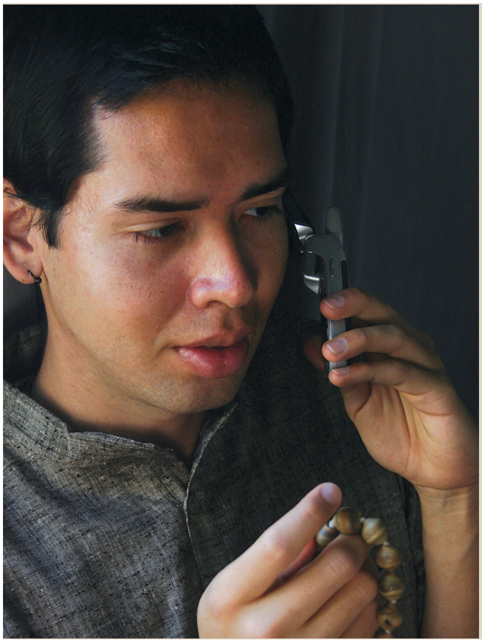
Guest: Okay. But who or what should I bow down to?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: First of all try to fully understand your disease. Then we shall prescribe your medicine. You are bowing down to death, you are bowing down to disease, you are bowing down to old age—you are bowing down to so many things. You are forced to bow down, yet still you are thinking, "I cannot bow down; I don't like to bow down." But you have to bow down. Why do you forget your position? That forgetfulness is your disease.

The next step is to understand that since you are being forced to bow down, now you have to find where you shall be happy even by bowing down. And that is Kṛṣṇa. Your bowing down will not be stopped, because you are meant for that, but if you bow down to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's representative, you become happy. That's the difference. If you don't bow down to Kṛṣṇa and His representative, you'll be forced to bow down to something else—*māyā* [Kṛṣṇa's material nature]. That is your position. You cannot be free at any moment.

But if you bow down to Kṛṣṇa and His representative, you'll be happy. For example, a child is always bowing down to his parents, and he is happy. His mother says, "My dear child, please come and sit down here." "Yes," says the child, and he is happy. This is the nature of the child's relationship with his mother. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa and His representative are like loving parents, and we are like helpless children in the clutches of *māyā.* But if we bow down to them we shall be safe and happy.

So you cannot stop your bowing down—that is not possible. But you simply have to seek out the proper persons to bow down to. That's all. If you artificially think, "I am not going to bow down to anyone; I am independent," then you suffer. You simply have to bow down to the right person—and that is Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa's representative.



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THE BOOK UNDER MY PILLOW

After more than a decade, a mysterious attachment to a certain book yields the sweetest fruit.

by Maṅgala Ārati Devī Dāsī

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that if someone just holds one of his books about Kṛṣṇa and appreciates it, without even buying it, that is enough to ensure that person a human form or higher in the next life. The power of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books has touched and changed forever many thousands of lives, including my own.

One morning in the glittering city of Mumbai, India, a small girl, barely seven years old, woke up without knowing that on that day she would make a journey she had been awaiting for many millions of lifetimes. That afternoon, in 1984, she held her grandfather's hand and walked into the complex of a gorgeous temple.

Under a beautiful clear sky, she beheld sprawling gardens and heard strange yet sweet-sounding chants. She walked around the gardens, holding her grandfather's hand and looking curiously at every passerby. There were so many people—faces she had never seen before. Yet a sense of comfortable familiarity enveloped her. She walked into a large hall where numerous people sang and prayed to beautiful white marble deities. For a while she didn't know whom she was staring at. Then someone told her it was Kṛṣṇa.

As afternoon turned to evening, some book-covered tables caught her eye, and she pleaded for one book in particular—*Rāja Vidyā: The King of Knowledge.* It was way beyond her intelligence, but the beautiful cover picture of two warriors blowing conch shells stole her heart. She held the book and wouldn't let go till her grandfather paid the five rupees.

From that moment, a deep attachment for the book began to grow in her. More than just a book, it was a person she would never let go of. She carried the book everywhere. Intuitively, she knew it had the power to protect her from all dangers and comfort her like no one else. At night, she hid it under her pillow and hugged it to sleep. When she was ten, as a Girl Guide (Girl Scout) she traveled alone to camps and on trips. Her special book was her solace on those lonely rides.

Then came years of boarding schools. When she was sick, sad, or afraid, she held on to the book, her best friend.

She hadn't yet read it.

Years went by, and now she was an out-of-control teenager. Between her studies and fantasies about the life that lay ahead, the only stable ground was *Rāja Vidyā*. By day it would stay on a makeshift altar, and at night it would lie in her arms as she slept.

One day, as she randomly flipped through the book, she came across a story about Indra, the king of heaven, as a pig. When Lord Brahmā, the engineer of the universe, arrived to rescue him, Indra refused to leave. Deluded, he was attached to his life as a pig. The book explained that each of us, in any condition of life, holds a deep attachment to the body and doesn't want to give it up. That is illusion. The explanation made sense, but she didn't know what to do with it.

Something from within her heart inspired her to bow down to the book when waking up, going somewhere, or starting anything new. No one asked her to do it; rather, people mocked her.

A Meeting on a Train

By now she had almost forgotten where she had got that book. Then one day, almost ten years after she'd received the book, she was sleeping in a train en route from Delhi to Pune when a noise woke her. It was 4:00 in the morning, and everyone was trying to sleep, but a sweet melody and loud drums and cymbals woke everyone up. People complained, but the girl was drawn to the singing and went up to the musicians, who were wearing strange clothes. They said they were devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa and were singing what they called *maṅgala-ārati* to remember the Lord. One of them invited her to visit their temple.

Her mother soon pulled her away from the strange people and kept her under guard.

A few more years passed by, and her attachment to the book reached new heights. Still, fool that she was, she had not read the book from cover to cover. She just held on to it. It had now become a storehouse of all her fondest memories—pictures of loved ones, her most precious letters, and tears from every time she was in need of help.

By day the book would stay on a makeshift altar, and at night it would lie in her arms as she slept.

Another Book on Kṛṣṇa

In January 2001, she was running around to finish some last-minute shopping, as she was leaving for Australia the next day, and she ran into a familiar face. She couldn't place the man at first, but his strange clothes stood out.

Then he said, "Hare Kṛṣṇa."

Memories flashed. There stood the person who four years earlier had awakened her on the train. She cooked up a quick excuse for not having ever visited the temple.

"I have something for you," he said. "It's a book called *Kṛṣṇa.*"

She had an attraction for Lord Kṛṣṇa, as they shared birthdays and her favorite book was about Kṛṣṇa. The book *Kṛṣṇa* cost 125 rupees, and although she had only 100 left, the kind gentleman gave her the book anyway. He also gave her the address of the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Melbourne. She happily took it, but thought she would never visit a temple. She was on her own search for truth and felt she might find it in history or science or perhaps even some ancient mystic religion. But she wasn't going to a temple—too much ritual. The next day she left for Australia with lots of clothes and two books: *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rāja Vidyā.*

Almost a year had gone by, and she had read a few stories from *Kṛṣṇa,* totally unaware of the author, totally unaware that *Rāja Vidyā* and *Kṛṣṇa* were written by the same author, and totally unaware of a mantra called the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and of the existence of ISKCON.

She had successfully ventured into aboriginal cultures, read books on science and religion, explored Wicca, American Indian tribes, Christianity, pagan religions. She had tried everything and anything, but nothing satisfied her.

One day, walking back from work on one of the busiest streets in downtown Melbourne, she heard cymbals and drums. She wondered for a moment whether the sound might be coming from an Indian festival or the arrival of a VIP. She was too preoccupied to stop and think, but before she could hop onto the streetcar, she saw a group of saffron-clad Australians singing ancient tunes and playing cymbals and drums on the street.

She stopped for a moment, and her eyes locked on to the face and smile of one of the women in the group. She was playing the cymbals and looked happier than the gods in heaven. She wondered who these people were but moved on.

A few days later, on the same street, she saw the same group and the same woman. They looked at her as if they knew her—and she them—from another time and place.

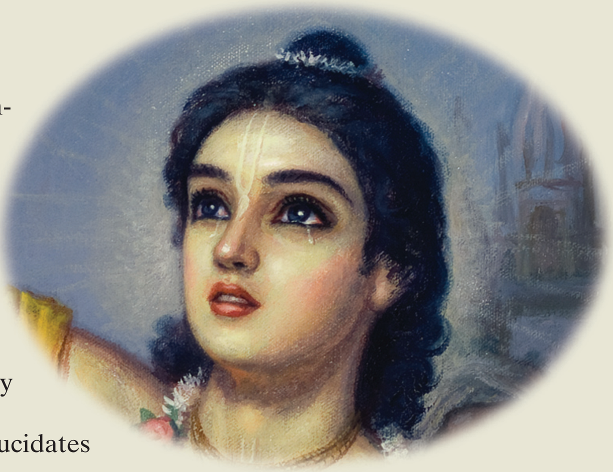
It was a Friday evening, and she decided to follow the group, trying to make sure no one else noticed. It would be too embarrassing if anyone found out she was following these strange people. She followed them into what they called a loft, and as she entered, a group of beautiful people were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. As she sang along, she broke into tears, not knowing who these people were and what this mantra was doing to her. She still had not

(*please turn to page 47*)

WINDOW ON THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Dispelling the Darkness of the Soul

Painting by Sac-cid-ānanda Dāsa



WITH THIS ISSUE of *Back to Godhead,* we commemorate the 522nd anniversary of the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In the second verse, first chapter, of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* the authorized sixteenth-century biography of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes, "I offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who are like the sun and moon. They have arisen simultaneously on the horizon of Gauḍa [Bengal] to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and thus wonderfully bestow benediction upon all."

Later in that chapter (*Ādi-līlā* 1.94–101), the author elucidates that text in eight verses:

"All kinds of activities, both auspicious and inauspicious, that are detrimental to the discharge of transcendental loving service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are actions of the darkness of ignorance." (1.94)

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Purport: "The poetical comparison of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda to the sun and moon is very significant. The living entities are spiritual sparks, and their constitutional position is to render devotional service to the Supreme Lord in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So-called pious activities and other ritualistic performances, pious or impious, as well as the desire to escape from material existence, are all considered to be coverings of these spiritual sparks. The living entities must get free from these superfluous coverings and fully engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"The purpose of the appearance of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda is to dispel the darkness of the soul. Before Their appearance, all these superfluous activities of the living entities were covering Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but after the appearance of these two brothers, people's hearts are becoming cleansed, and they are again becoming situated in the real position of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī continues:

"By the grace of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, this darkness of ignorance is removed and the truth is brought to light." (1.95)

"The Absolute Truth is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and loving devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhibited in pure love is achieved through congregational chanting of the holy name, which is the essence of all bliss." (1.96)

"The sun and moon dissipate the darkness of the external world and thus reveal external material objects like pots and plates." (1.97)

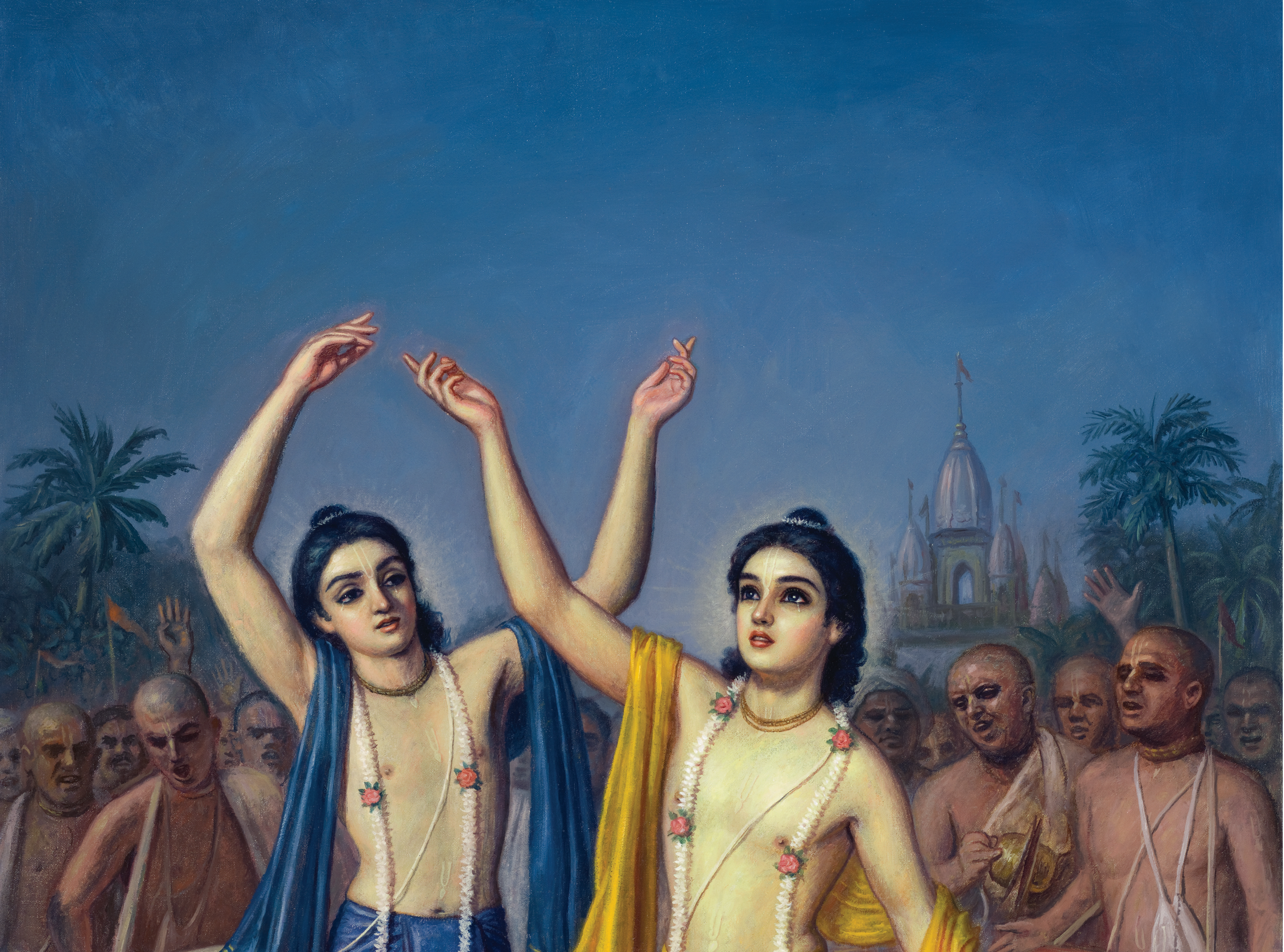
"But these two brothers [Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda] dissipate the darkness of the inner core of the heart, and thus They help one meet the two kinds of *bhāgavatas* [persons or things in relationship with the Personality of Godhead]." (1.98)

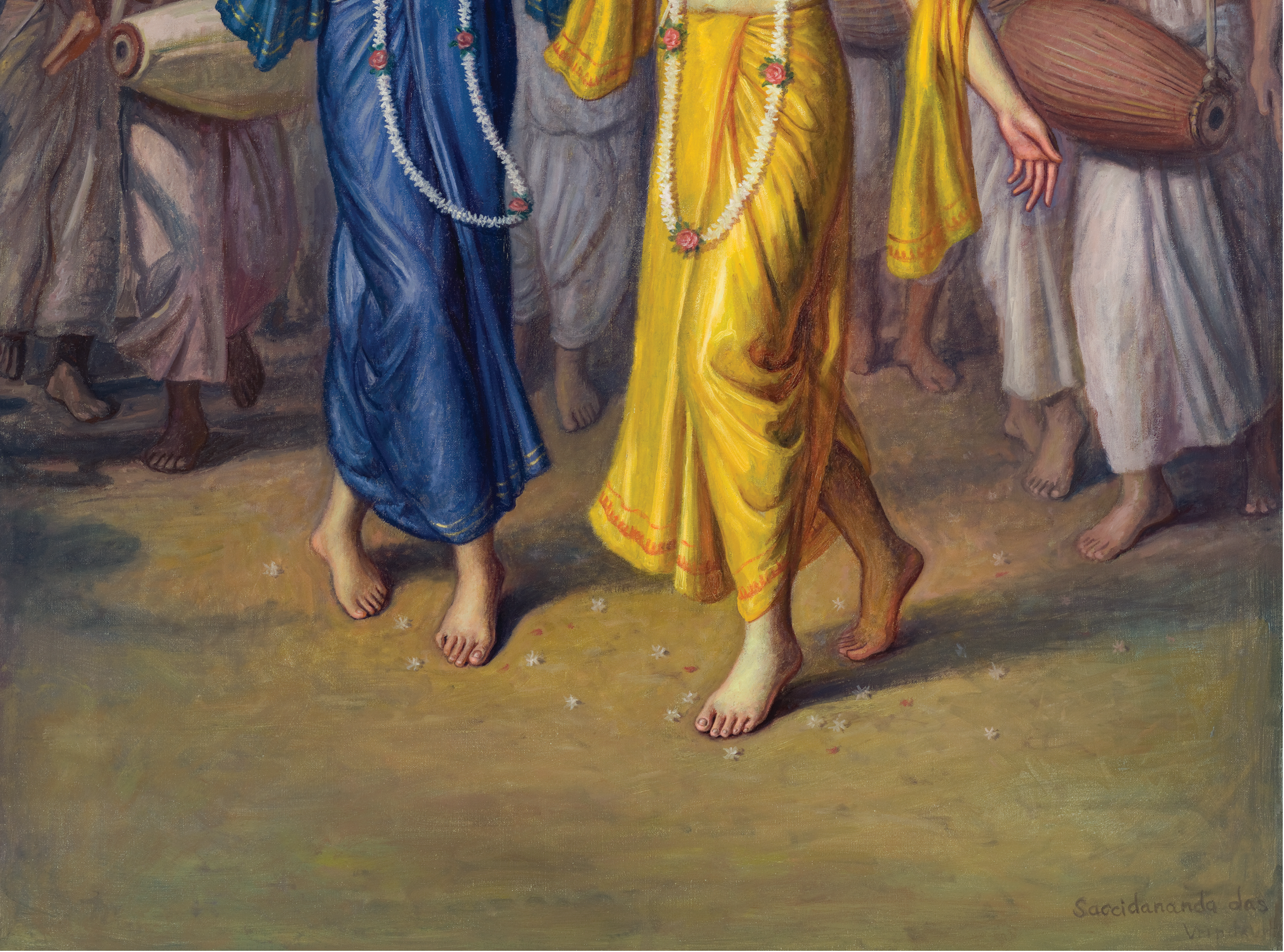
"One of the *bhāgavatas* is the great scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and the other is the pure devotee absorbed in the mellows of loving devotion." (1.99)

"Through the actions of these two *bhāgavatas* the Lord instills the mellows of transcendental loving service into the heart of a living being, and thus the Lord, in the heart of His devotee, comes under the control of the devotee's love." (1.100)

"The first wonder is that both brothers appear simultaneously, and the other is that They illuminate the innermost depths of the heart." (1.101) ✿

Please turn page for the full painting →




Saccidananda das

Chanting At the World's Biggest Street Party

The holy name resounds through the streets of Amsterdam on the Queen's birthday.

Text by Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa

Photos by Tina Kontrec

WHEN COUNTRIES observe national holidays, people often gather by the thousands to celebrate. Last year I was one of a group of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees on hand for Amsterdam's Queen's Day, known locally as Koninginnedag and described on

one web page as "The World's Biggest Street Party." Every year, one to two million people crowd Amsterdam's streets to celebrate the birthday of the queen of the Netherlands.

What were we doing at an event celebrating the birthday of a worldly dignitary, where vendors sell things no one needs and drunk revelers get drunker by the hour? We were following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya and His glorious associates, who in distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness ignored the spiritual standing of the recipients. Whenever they got a chance, they distributed love of Godhead by publicly chanting the holy names of the Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

> People generally cannot understand the actual meaning

> of chanting and dancing. . . . Not only did Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates demonstrate this chanting and dancing, but the six Gosvāmīs also followed in the next generation. The present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement follows the same principle, and therefore simply by chanting and dancing we have received good responses all over the world. It is to be understood, however, that this chanting and dancing do not belong to this material world. They are actually transcendental activities, for the more one engages in chanting and dancing, the more he can taste the nectar of transcendental love of Godhead. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi* 7.22, Purport)

All the people of Amsterdam, and any other place for that matter, be they vendors or consumers, sober or drunk, are pure spiritual souls. Lord Caitanya has said, "Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing

and chanting, this love naturally awakens." Kṛṣṇa's devotees try to give as many people as possible the chance to hear the name, glories, and instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Such hearing will purify them, bringing them one step closer to love of God, which alone can satisfy the needs of the soul, our real self.

Śrīla Prabhupāda set the exam-

ple of chanting in public, and as a result of hearing him, many people gave up degrading activities like intoxication and meat-eating and took up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda stressed that his followers must practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness strictly so that by their pure chanting others could become attracted to pure devotion to the Lord.

Orange, Orange Everywhere

Queen's Day was a wild scene. Her Highness was born in the Orange Dynasty, so people wear orange for the occasion. Some wore orange wigs styled with curls, dreadlocks, or mohawks. Head apparel included caps, berets, ski hats, broad-rimmed hats, construction hats, cone-shaped hats, and a variety of crowns, all orange. Some people painted their faces orange. Some wore orange glasses or rode on orange bicycles. Orange sweatshirts, orange overalls, orange tights, orange ponchos—orange everywhere.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* were already dressed for the occasion, with their orange dhotis, kurtas, wraps, and caps, and a few of the women donned orange shawls and scarves.

About seventy chanting and dancing Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees crisscrossed the canal-lined streets of Amsterdam for eight hours. Devotees hailed from Canada, America, England, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Czech Republic, and other countries. Many were disciples and friends of Holland-born Kadamba Kānana Swami, a dedicated organizer of the yearly event. [Above, with microphone.]

Throughout the day, devotees gave out the holy name, introduced inquisitive people to the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and tasted great spiritual joy in doing so.

If you happen to be in Amsterdam this coming April 30—or can arrange to be there—please join Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* party on Queen's Day. Take part in delivering the highest benefit to thousands of orange-clad people who don't know that what they're looking for is devotion to Kṛṣṇa, which lies asleep within their hearts. ❁

Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa, a devotee for twenty-five years, travels to promote the public congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, teaches classes on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is a Krishna.com Live-Help volunteer, and proofreads BTG and other publications. You can write him at kk@krishna.com.

Don't look now, but there's a GODD in your pocket

An example of Hare Kṛṣṇa lingo, and why it makes sense.

by Navīna Śyāma Dāsa

HARIBOL, PRABHU. Do you know where the *bhoga* is? I need to make *prasāda* for the *iṣṭha-goṣṭhī* tonight."

On hearing something like this, a visitor to a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple would be justifiably perplexed.

The speaker could just as easily have said, "Excuse me, respected friend, do you know where the groceries are? I need to cook for the meeting tonight."

Although insider lingo is common in groups of any kind, be they centered on a shared belief system or just a shared hobby, the special terms used by Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees have great import. They're not just arbitrary formulations: They influence our attitudes and actions. For example, a little unpacking of the epithet we use for money—Lakṣmī—can serve to show just how deep language can be.

We first note that Lakṣmī is a person. Equating an inanimate object like money with a person is not surprising, for the Vedic universe teems with life and agency: There's a person behind the rain, springtime has a face, and the planets sometimes don't get along. This omnipresence of personality makes living in the world more a matter of relationship than ownership; rather than trying to control the forces and features of nature, we humans are encouraged to cooperate and co-exist with them.

Of course, some of these persons are more benign than others. For example, Yamarāja, the ruler of death, is a noble and wise servant of the Lord who certainly deserves our respect.

Still, he's hardly someone you hope to see at your next dinner party:

"Have we met?"

"Not yet."

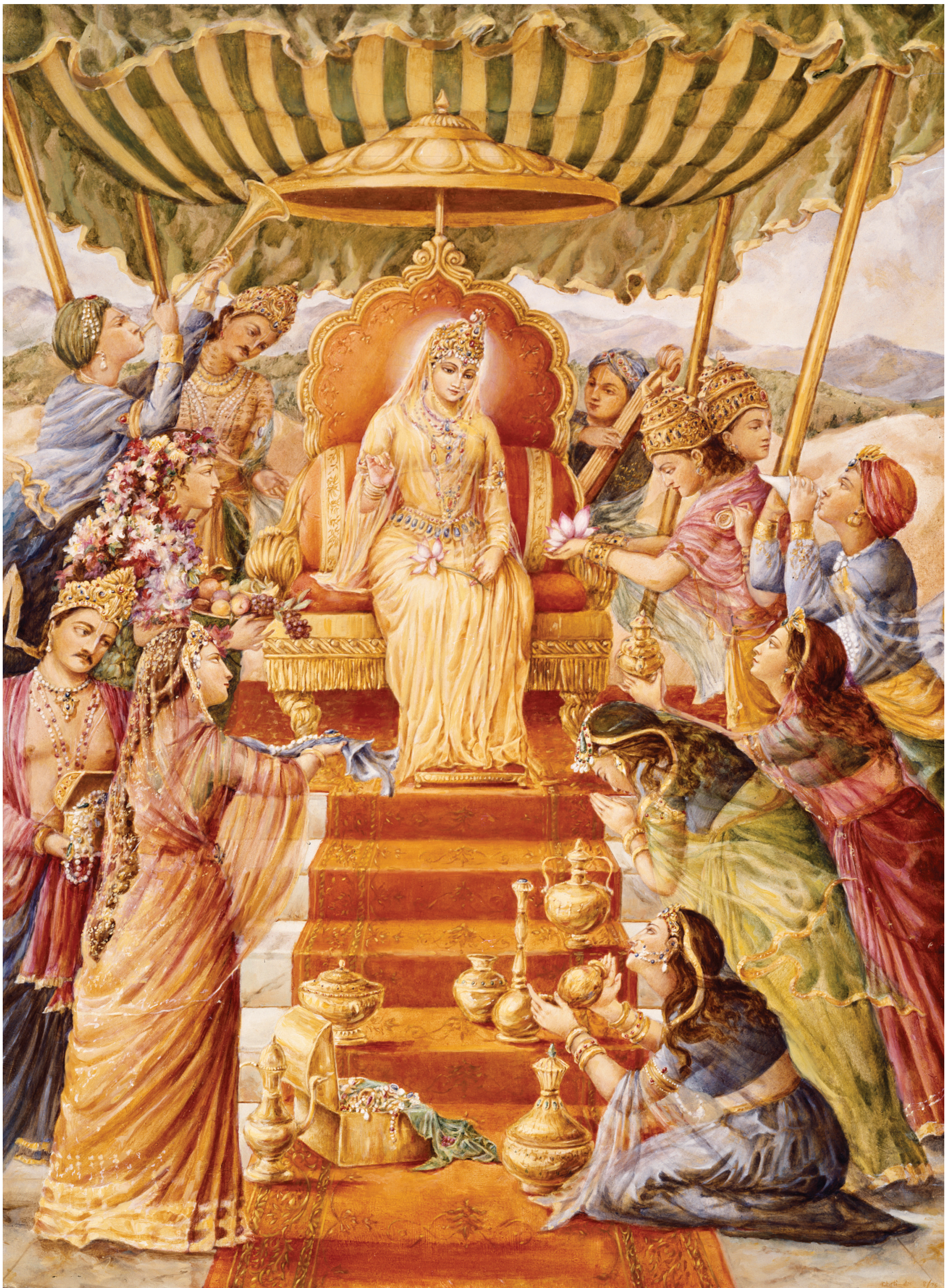
Lakṣmī, however, is the wife of Lord Viṣṇu and the mother of the universe, and her presence (as money) is therefore considered most auspicious. Such an understanding may come as a surprise to those used to thinking of money as the source of evil, but it is certainly in line with how the truly enlightened think. Swamis or gurus who reject wealth as inherently antithetical to spiritual progress never impressed Śrīla Prabhupāda. Instead of rejecting riches, he emphasized the question of how to deal with them: Only if used and accepted in the wrong consciousness will they become a corrupting force.

ESS

Don’t Waste It

So what is the proper way to deal with money? If we simply meditate on it as a form of Lakṣmī, we can derive two basic principles. The first is that we shouldn’t waste money. If we have some, we’ve been entrusted with the care of the supreme goddess. We must be cautious, then, to engage her in befitting ways. If we use our wealth to acquire unnecessary gadgets or indulge in superfluous luxuries, we are making Lakṣmī our personal maidservant. How can we hope to please the Lord by indenturing His beloved queen? Rather, as Kṛṣṇa explains in the sixteenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā,* those who succumb to insatiable desire move away from God and subject themselves to a tormented existence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was well aware of this pitfall. Even though he dealt with tens of thousands of dollars, he was



After her transcendental appearance from the ocean of milk, higher beings from around the universe worship the goddess Lakṣmī, also known as Ramā Devī.

Painting by Dhṛti Devī Dāsī

“IN YOUR OWN WORDS” RETURNS WITH THE NEXT ISSUE!

The question:

Which devotee in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* inspires you the most, and why?

Deadline for submissions: February 15.

Here’s the question for the following issue (July/August):

How has Kṛṣṇa Consciousness made you a better person in your everyday life?

Deadline for submissions: April 15.

To reply. go to Krishna.com/inyourownwords.

LOOKING FOR NEWS OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MOVEMENT?

Log on to www.ISKCON.com.

The Internet is the ideal place for timely news, and ISKCON.com, run by ISKCON Communications, maintains an active news page. So whether you want to see what’s happening in ISKCON or have some news to report, log on to www.ISKCON.com.

careful not to waste even one cent. As he mentioned to a disciple in a letter about a business deal gone bad, “I prayed to Kṛṣṇa specially for this recovery because I thought that Kṛṣṇa’s money may not be utilized for sense gratification.” He was keen that the opulence that rightfully belongs to the Supreme not be used in the pursuit of base enjoyment.

Don’t Hoard It

The other extreme is undesirable too. We should not hoard money out of greed. Lakṣmī Devī is not meant to be our prisoner, locked up for us to simply behold and thereby derive some illusory sense of power and control. Under the pretense of being frugal, we must not avoid legitimate expenditures. To perform the Rājasūya sacrifice, which would proclaim his sovereignty as world emperor, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira retrieved tons of gold that had been deposited in the Himalayas. But he didn’t do this for his own glory. He acted out of duty and devotion. Not only had Kṛṣṇa and Nārada Muni requested him to become the emperor and establish righteous rule, but also he knew that the sacrifice would give him a unique opportunity to exalt Kṛṣṇa before all the great personalities of the universe.

In a similar vein, Śrīla Prabhupāda wasn’t averse to spending large amounts of money on prime locations for his temples and other means of sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness with the world. Neither did he frown upon appropriate personal spending. In a letter to a disciple about a much-needed surgery the disciple was avoiding, he wrote: “I very much appreciate this example, but it is my order that whenever you are in such trouble, you should not minimize any expenditure. You must have the best kind of treatment available, and you can spend from the money you are collecting on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. . . . You should not hesitate to spend from Kṛṣṇa’s money.”

We best not take this message out of context, as some sort of authoritative grounds for pampering ourselves. (It was, after all, a private correspondence and not a public proclamation.) Nevertheless, it does illustrate an important principle: There are bona fide uses of money, and our personal maintenance can be one of them.

The Best Use of Money

How do we know when to spend money and when to save it? The examples above hint at an overarching third principle. Again, the key is to meditate on money as Lakṣmī herself. When she appeared from the milk ocean and began searching for a suitable husband, she found only Lord Viṣṇu to be without flaw. She is described as *bhagavat parā,* which Prabhupāda translates as “one who is absolutely dedicated to being possessed and enjoyed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.8.8). As a chaste and faithful wife, her duty and pleasure is to serve her husband. We should therefore engage her in all manner of tasks that help glorify God and fulfill His desires.

His most cherished desire, as expressed in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* is that the forgetful souls of this world be once again reminded of His love and the deep relationship they eternally share. Thus, money is best used to engage ourselves and others in devotional service. By so doing, we become intermediaries who help reunite Lakṣmī with her eternal Lord, rather than usurpers who artificially lord over her ourselves. Along the way, it is certainly appropriate to spend money on our own subsistence. As obedient children of our father, we are entitled to a share of our mother’s service.

The first mantra of *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* presents the same conclusion more philosophically: “Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong." We are herein directed to use all opulence in the service of God, its rightful proprietor and only true master. As dutiful servants, we should employ whatever portion of our riches is needed to keep ourselves and our dependents mentally and physically healthy, and devote the balance to the spiritual edification of all of humanity.

Devotees' use of the term *Lakṣmī* is purposeful and profound. By so doing, we hope to move our minds from rejecting money as an "it" that is inherently antithetical to spiritual life, to accepting money as a "she" who can greatly enhance our service to the Lord. If we can avoid the twin seditions of capricious expenditure and miserly reserve, and instead maintain the wholesome mood of viewing money as the energy of God and as our supreme worshipable goddess, we are sure to prosper both in this world and in the next.

Navīna Śyāma Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti Cāru Swami. He lives with his wife, Kṛṣṇa Priyā Devī Dāsī, in Alachua, Florida, where they both serve at the New Raman Reti School.

THE BOOK

(*continued from page 32*)

yet made the connection between her two books, these people, and the mantra.

A New Life

Her life started to change. She visited the loft a few times a week and took a lot of notes. Everything these people said seemed so true. One day they invited her to visit their temple, and she readily agreed to go.

She arrived at the temple on a Saturday morning, and it was empty. So she sat facing closed doors and admiring how clean and quiet the temple was, unlike anything she had seen. She wanted to pray, but didn't know what to do.

She turned around and saw someone she thought was an old man. A closer look revealed that it was a deity. He looked familiar, but she couldn't figure out where she had seen him before. That night before going to sleep, she pulled the book from under her pillow and flipped it over. There he was, and under his picture were the words "His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda."

As a million goose bumps appeared on her body, she realized that Śrīla Prabhupāda, by the power of his books, had dragged this spoiled brat to his presence and given her the tastiest, sweetest gift: the holy name of God.

This was the story of my insignificant life. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books have deeply touched many thousands of people like me. That is their power. They are not ordinary books but transcendental gems from another world, a world not marked by birth, death, old age, and disease. The very presence of Prabhupāda's books in one's life can draw one ever closer to the spiritual realm of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

Maṅgala Ārati Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Holiness Devāmṛta Swami, lives with her husband in Toronto, where she works for a bank as a project manager.

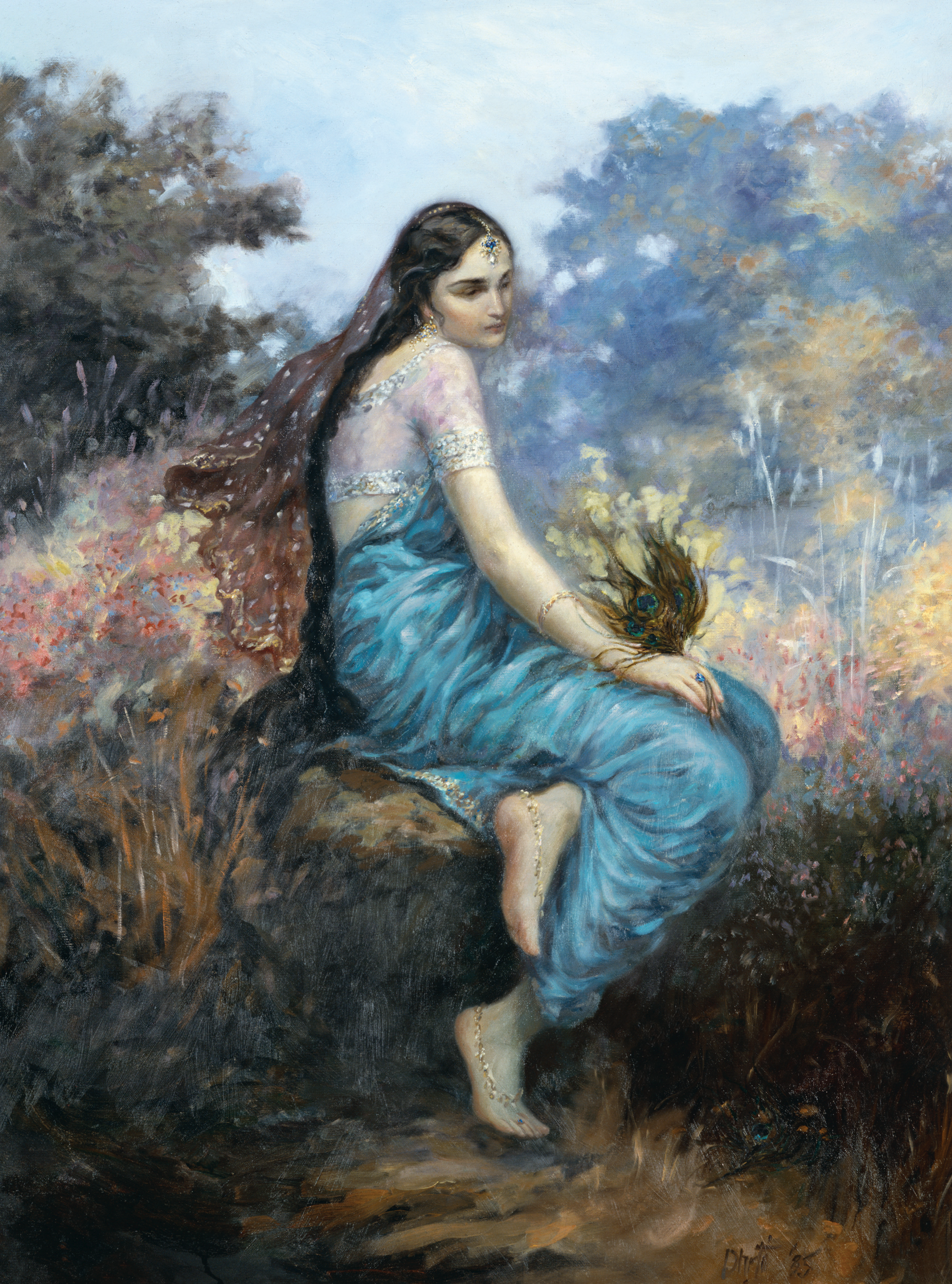
LIVING & LEARNING IN VRINDAVAN

Bhaktivedanta Gurukula and International School (BGIS), Vrindavan, is accepting student applications for the 2009–2010 school year, which begins in April 2009.

Founded by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1976, BGIS is dedicated to the healthy and holistic education of primary (*gurukula*) and secondary (high school) students. The environment and curriculum are based on the principles and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The goal of BGIS is to inspire learning and success in the social, emotional, academic, and spiritual development of each student.

For more information, log on to www.bgis.org, e-mail info@bgis.org, or phone +91 0 (565) 2540-206 or -697.



ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ

The Feminine Divine

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology includes
an awareness of both the feminine and the
masculine aspects of God's personality.

by Satyarāja Dāsa

THE DIVINE counterpart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known as Śrī Rādhā. Together, according to the ancient Vaiṣṇava tradition, this dual-gendered divinity is God—male and female dimensions of the Absolute Truth. Śrī Rādhā is the complete energy, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the complete energetic source. They are nondifferent from each other, just as musk and its scent are forever merged, or as fire and heat are inseparable.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one yet have assumed two separate forms to enjoy loving pastimes. Numerous theological texts explain how this is so, but the most thorough are the writings of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī, great masters in the Vaiṣṇava tradition whose books have been translated and commented upon by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. To understand Śrī Rādhā, then, English readers would do well to turn to Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Śrī Rādhā in Literature

Historically, the ancient *Purāṇas* reveal much about Śrī Rādhā's manifest pastimes, even if *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.30.28), the cream of all such Purāṇic literature, mentions Her name only once—with the indirect *anayārādhitaḥ*, indicating that She is "the one who worships Kṛṣṇa best." Both the *Padma Purāṇa* and the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa,* on the other hand, elaborate on Her pastimes of love with Kṛṣṇa and reveal how the divine couple is the source of all that is. The *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa,* in fact, reveals an esoteric creation story in which Rādhā co-creates the material world with Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Rādhā's dominance in Vaiṣṇava theology did not come to light until the twelfth century, when the saintly poet Jayadeva Gosvāmī wrote his famous Sanskrit work *Gīta Govinda.* Kṛṣṇa's spiritual love then became a celebrated theme throughout India, colorfully conveyed in festivals and the arts, with the personality of Rādhā sometimes eclipsing even Kṛṣṇa.

It is important to point out that Jayadeva understood the spiritual nature of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's love. He knew that people could easily misconstrue it as mundane, comparing his work to erotic love poetry (as many still do). Anticipating this misconception, he commenced his *Gīta Govinda* with a section called *Daśa-avatāra,* in which he clearly outlines Kṛṣṇa's divine nature, listing and glorifying His transcendental descents as incarnations (*avatāra*). With this as a preface, it becomes obvious that the loving affairs to follow—the affairs of this same divine Kṛṣṇa, who incarnates as so many *avatāras*—are not ordinary. Indeed, they represent the zenith of spiritual love.

This love was expressed more fully after Jayadeva's time. In the fifteenth century, two Bengali poets, Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati, wrote beautiful Bengali verse about the divine couple. In the sixteenth century, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in the guise of Their devotee—relished this poetry, along with Jayadeva's breakthrough

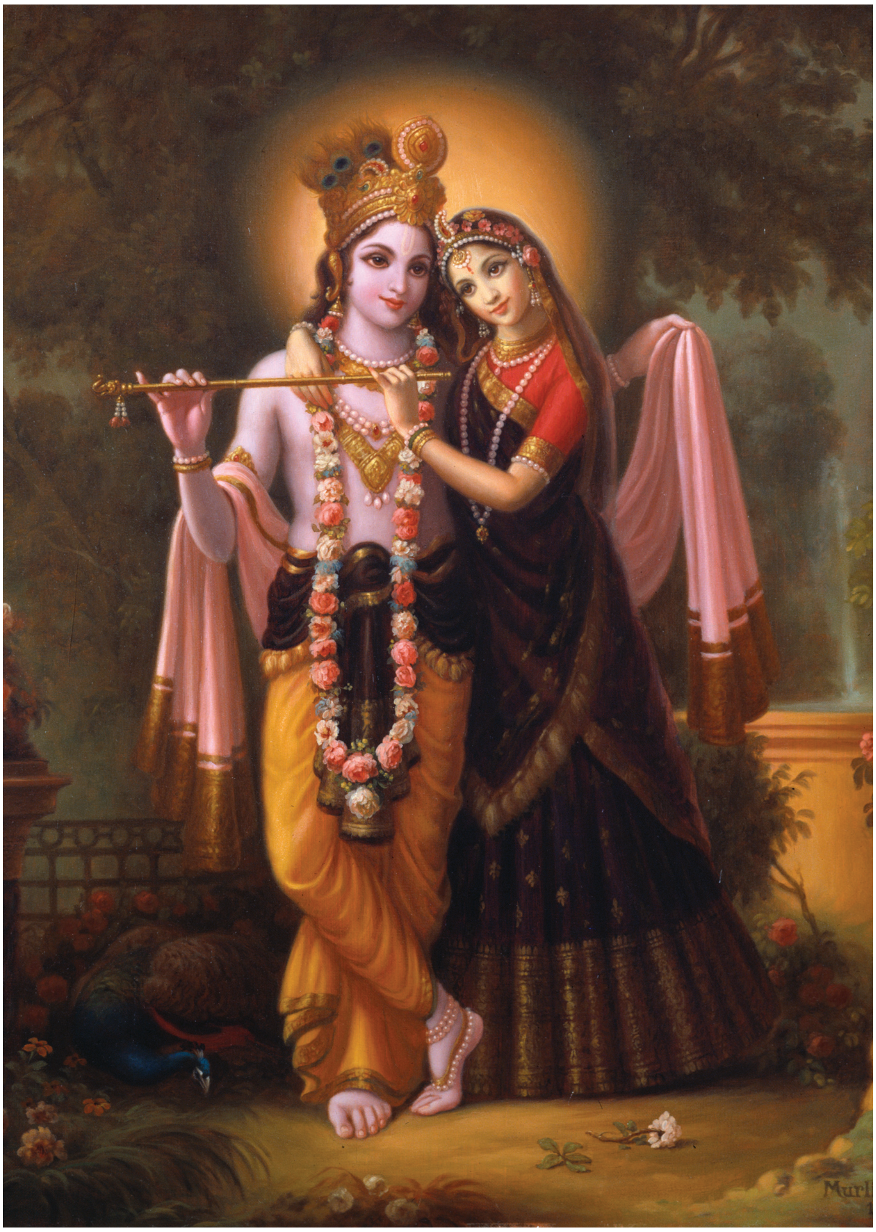
Painting by Dhṛti Devī Dāsī

Sanskrit work. He also enjoyed hearing the story of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as expressed in the ancient work of Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta,* and in a contemporary poem, Rāmānanda Rāya's *Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭakam.*

Śrī Caitanya's followers were quick to add their own realizations and insights based squarely on the earlier literature. Two outstanding examples are the *Rādhā-rasa-sudha-nidhi-stotram,* composed by Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī, and *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā,* by Rūpa Gosvāmī, the latter of which is easily the most detailed exposition of Śrī Rādhā's divine personality ever published.

Her Divine Pastimes

How does Rādhā's story unfold in the world of three dimensions? Though there are many versions of this story, the most gripping is found in the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Pātāla-khaṇḍa,* Chapter 71): Early one morning, in the country atmosphere of Vraja (ninety miles south of present-day Delhi) some fifty centuries ago, Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja was taking his morning bath in the holy Yamuna River. Just then, a beautiful baby girl floated by, lying on a radiant and fully blossomed lotus. With intense glee, he embraced the divine infant and carried Her off to his queen, Kīrtidā Devī.


Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

Because Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the full Absolute Truth, devotees always worship Them together.

When Kīrtidā saw her husband with this magnificent child, she ran over and showered little Rādhā with unrelenting affection.

But the king and queen quickly noticed that the baby's eyes did not open. This naturally broke their hearts, and they prayed that God might bless Her with the power of sight.

Soon, Nanda Mahārāja's wife, Yaśodā Devī, arrived from Gokula, holding young Śrī Kṛṣṇa in her arms. Vṛṣabhānu and Kīrtidā, now the parents of Śrī Rādhā, greeted her with due honor, but Yaśodā could not take her eyes off the newborn baby girl resting in Kīrtidā Devī's arms.

Yaśodā drew closer with baby Kṛṣṇa, and as soon as Kṛṣṇa came face to face with the baby girl, She opened Her eyes for the first time. Appropriately, Her first sight was the moonlike face of Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and She paused as She gazed upon His lovely form. Kṛṣṇa too was overwhelmed with love as He saw before Him His eternal consort, in the guise of a baby.

In this way, the scriptures relate how the eternal divine couple go about "meeting" each other as They appear, time and again, in the material world. As They "grow in years," They play with loving friends, swim in the Yamuna, graze their cows, and relish each other's loving embrace. Sacred texts and the realizations of the sages elaborate on the details, establishing narratives that serve as virtual magnets, attracting all who hear them back to the spiritual realm.

The Circle Dance of Love

Of all such narratives, the *rāsa-līlā,* the circular dance of love described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* is in many ways the most important.

The divine dance takes place

one moonlit autumn night when the cowherd maidens (*gopīs*) of Vṛndāvana, upon hearing the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, sneak away from their families to be with Him. The *rāsa-līlā* is considered one of the highest and most esoteric of Kṛṣṇa's revealed pastimes, and it should never be confused with mundane pastimes of prurient interest. Accordingly, Vaiṣṇava commentators make one thing perfectly clear: romantic love between human beings is a diminished, compromised reflection of the soul's original, ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa, God, in the spiritual world. Studying the *rāsa-līlā* under a bona fide spiritual master allows one to realize this as a tangible truth. It also allows one to develop love for God, just as the *gopīs* do in their dance of love.

Names of Rādhā

There are innumerable names for the feminine divine, just as there are for Kṛṣṇa, Her male counterpart. Here are some of the more common names by which Her devotees call out to Her:

Ārādhana: the root of the name *Rādhā,* meaning "one who excels in worshiping Kṛṣṇa"
Dāmodara Rati: She who dresses herself to please Dāmodara (Kṛṣṇa)
Gāṇḍharvī: expert singer
Gokula-taruṇī: She whom all the young girls of Gokula (Vṛndāvana) worship
Govinda-mohinī: She who mystifies Govinda
Govinda-nandinī: She who gives pleasure to Govinda (Kṛṣṇa)
Govinda-sarvasva: the all-in-all of Govinda
Harā: She who steals Kṛṣṇa's heart with Her love (mentioned in *Nārada-pañcarātra* 5.5.59)
Kṛṣṇamayī: one who is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa
Madana-Mohana-Mohinī: the enchanter of the enchanter of Kāmadeva. Kṛṣṇa enchants everyone, including Kāmadeva (Madana), the god of attraction, but Śrī Rādhā enchants Kṛṣṇa.
Rādhārāṇī: Rādhā, the queen
Rādhikā: one whose worship of Kṛṣṇa consists of fulfilling His desires
Sarva-kānta-śiromaṇī: the crown jewel of all Kṛṣṇa's consorts
Sarva-lakṣmī: the source and complete form of the goddess of fortune
Vṛndāvaneśvarī: the queen of Vṛndāvana
Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī: the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu

For a description of the sacred marks on Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's feet, see http://www.vrindavan.de/lotusfeet.htm

Rādhā's Mercy

In short, the theology of Śrī Rādhā is deep. The scriptures describe that one must go through many lives of pious acts, religious rituals, and yogic perfection before attaining the mercy of Śrī Rādhā. And when one does, Kṛṣṇa is not far off. In fact, it is through Śrī Rādhā's mercy that Kṛṣṇa becomes attainable.

Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's mercy incarnation, and through Her one can attain the culmination of the spiritual pursuit. Śrīla Prabhupāda sums this up as follows:

> "Rādhārāṇī, You are so dear to Kṛṣṇa. So we offer our respectful obeisances unto You." Rādhārāṇī is *hari-priyā:* "very dear to Kṛṣṇa." Through the mercy of Rādhārāṇī we can easily approach Kṛṣṇa. If Rādhārāṇī recommends, "This devotee is very nice," then Kṛṣṇa immediately accepts me, however great a fool I may be. Because I am recommended by Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa accepts me. Therefore in Vṛndāvana you'll find all the devotees chanting Rādhārāṇī's name more than Kṛṣṇa's. Wherever you'll go, you'll find the devotees greeting one another, "Jaya Rādhe!" You'll find this still in Vṛndāvana. The devotees are glorifying Rādhārāṇī.
>
> If you go by the speculative process to understand Kṛṣṇa, it will take many, many lives. But if you take to devotional service and just try to please Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa will be gotten very easily. Rādhārāṇī can deliver Kṛṣṇa. She is so great a devotee, the emblem of *mahā-bhāgavata.* Even Kṛṣṇa cannot understand the quality of Rādhārāṇī's devotion. Although Kṛṣṇa says *vedāhaṁ samatītāni*—"I know everything"—He fails to understand Rādhārāṇī. She is so great.
>
> —*Elevation to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness,* Chapter 5

It is in pursuit of these truths that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa descend as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, for in that form They taste the highest mercy and bestow it on others. The chief manifestation of that mercy is the holy name in the form of the *mahā-mantra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

In this mantra both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are fully manifest. A prayer to Śrī Rādhā (*Hare* is the vocative form of *Harā,* another name for Rādhārāṇī), it beseeches Kṛṣṇa to be engaged in devotional service, the highest form of yoga. Rādhā is the medium through which such service is enacted, for She is the embodiment of devotion, the essence of love for Kṛṣṇa.

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BOOK EXCERPT

Śrīlā Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's South India Tour

In the early 1930s, the intrepid preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness receives grand receptions from the devoted people of South India.

by Bhakti Vikāśa Swami

South India, 1930–31 & 1932

ŚRĪLA BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA Sarasvatī wanted to install 108 *pāda-pīṭhas* (replicas of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's footprints) at sacred locations that had been visited by the Lord, to create awareness of His having been there. But he was able to do so at only eight locations, five of them while touring South India in 1930.[1]

Advance parties were sent to arrange with local temple authorities for brief and modest installation programs. At each place, accompanied by a small party, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would install a stone imprint representing Mahāprabhu's feet by washing it with Gaṅgā water, performing *ārati,* reading from the relevant section of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and performing *saṅkīrtana*. He would give the priests and temple managers funds for the construction of a simple shrine for the footprints, and within a day or two move on.

The expedition began on 23 December 1930, when the party proceeded from Calcutta to Jajpur, Orissa. There Lord Caitanya's footprints were installed near the river Vaitaraṇī, also known as Virajā. Lord Caitanya's grandfather, Upendra Miśra, was said to have hailed from Jajpur, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his troupe visited the inhabitants of that area who claimed descent from Lord Caitanya's family. They also went to see the Varāhadeva deity, whose temple was on the other side of the Vaitaraṇī. While crossing, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented, "To pass over the Vaitaraṇī means to leave the material habitat and enter Brahmaloka (the spiritual world)."[2] On the night of 25 December they left from Jajpur station, at the periphery of thick jungle. When suddenly the sound of

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Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. This article is an excerpt from *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava,* scheduled for publication this year.

tigers was heard, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked, "Oh, are the tigers roaring?"

On 26 December the troupe arrived at Kūrmakṣetra, where the deity of Śrī Kūrma presides. In the evening, resident *brāhmaṇas* offered a ceremonial welcome, and after performing a *parikramā* of the temple, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura installed Lord Caitanya's footprints. Next the party established *pāda-pīṭhas* at Siṁhācalam (27 December), Kovvur (29 December), and Maṅgalagiri (31 December). At Kovvur, by consulting the local public and the description in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* an advance party approximately ascertained the site on the bank of the river Godāvarī at which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had first met and discussed with Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya. For establishing a *pāda-pīṭha* there, Śrīpāda Bon Mahārāja, the leader of the party, selected a suitable plot, which the owner happily donated.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and company reached Madras on 2 January 1931. The *Harmonist* described much of the rest of the tour thus:

> After a stay of two days at Madras His Divine Grace started for Trivandrum, visiting on the way the temples of Śrī Varadarāja at Viṣṇukāñcī, of Śrī Raṅganāthaji at Śrīraṅgam, and of Janārdana Viṣṇu at Varkala.[3] His Divine Grace reached Trivandrum on 7 January. He next visited Śrī Ananta Padmanābha and then proceeded to Tiruvattar, where he saw Śrī Ādi-keśava. Śrī Gaurasundara discovered the manuscript of the *Brahma-saṁhitā* at this place. His Divine Grace visited Śrī Kanyākumārī on the ninth. This is the southernmost point of India, otherwise known as Cape Comorin. His Divine Grace returned to Trivandrum the same day and presided at a public lecture delivered in the local Jubilee Hall by His Holiness Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja of the Gauḍīya Mission. His Divine Grace returned to Calcutta on 14 January by way of Madras, where he presided at a second lecture by Swamiji Bon on the life and

> teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, delivered at the local Mādhva Association. His Divine Grace had been pleased to visit the residence of Śrījut Rāmacandra Rao at the town of Rajmahendri, at his earnest prayer. This gentleman had made a free gift of some valuable lands at Kovvur for the erection of the shrine of the footprints of the Supreme Lord, in commemoration with His meeting with Rāya Rāmānanda at that place in 1510 A.D. His Divine Grace was hospitably received on behalf of the Travancore State and provided with a suitable residence during his short stay at Trivandrum, at the Padma Vilāsa Palace.[4]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that the deity of Kanyākumārī, after which the township was named, resembled that of Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, and that although Kanyākumārī was generally accepted to be Durgā prior to her marriage with Lord Śīva, Vaiṣṇavas consider her to be Lakṣmī, daughter of the ocean, on whose shore she resides. He said that just as Kurukṣetra is the place of the elder *gopīs,* Kanyākumārī is that of the unmarried *gopīs,* and here *vipralambha-bhāva* is triple that in Purī.[5]

Returning to Bengal prior to the Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remained in North India for almost a year before again heading for Madras (this time with twenty devotees), where he was accorded several formal receptions, the one conducted upon his arrival being unprecedented. Organized by members of the public in conjunction with the Municipal Corporation, it consisted of local traditional music parties, a brass band, *kīrtana* groups, a procession of Boy Scouts, and throngs of people, many waving flags and festoons and all straining to see and hear this extraordinary saint from Bengal. Thirty-two guns were fired in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's honor, and troops led by Britishers were deployed to regulate the crowd. All the important newspapers of the city covered the reception and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's subsequent activities in Madras. On 11 January 1932, under the heading "Gauḍīya Maṭha Guru Mahārāja in Madras," the *Justice* reported:

At the ceremony for laying the foundation of the Kānai-kīrtana Hall in Madras.

> His Divine Grace Paramahaṁsa Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the great Ācārya of the Gauḍīya cult and President of Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, arrived in Madras yesterday by the Calcutta Mail.
>
> His Holiness's party consisted of about thirty persons and included the secretary of the said *sabhā;* his private secretary; the editor of the *Gauḍīya;* Prof. J. Dasadhikary, Bhakti-Śāstrī; Prof. H. P. Mandal; and Mr. G. C. Deb, Retd. Deputy Supdt. of Allahabad.
>
> His Holiness was honored and garlanded on the way at Cuttack Station by the residents of the city, at Rajahmundry, Kovvur, and Basin Bridge.
>
> At Central Station, His Divine

> Grace was received with shouts of glory by many eminent citizens, and the members of the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha. As soon as the Svāmījī got down, B. H. Bon Mahārāja introduced to him the President of the Madras Corporation, T. S. Ramaswami Iyer; the Hon'ble Minister Mr. P. T. Rajan; S. V. Ramaswami Mudaliar; and the Hon'ble Dewan Bāhādura S. G. Narayanswami Chettiar, C.I.E.; and they garlanded the Svāmījī.
>
> His Divine Grace got into the very beautifully decorated car, and in a huge *saṅkīrtana* procession consisting of *triḍaṇḍi-svāmīs, brahmacārīs,* gentries of the city, provincial scouts, several *kīrtana* parties, and the devotees from Calcutta, started from the front of the Madras Club and slowly proceeded to Gauḍīya Maṭha, Gopalapuram, passing through West Cott's Road, Woods Road, Rayapettah Bazar Road, Lloyd Road, and Corn Smith Road.
>
> Besides the distinguished gentlemen who received the Gosvāmī Mahārāja at Central Station, the inhabitants of Rayapettah, Mylapure, and Gopalapuram received the great Ācārya at the corner of Pycrofts Road, and Hon'ble Minister Dewan Bāhādura S. Kumarswami Reddiar accompanied His Divine Grace to the Maṭha itself. The whole procession party with the Svāmījī Mahārāja got into the new site of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and then again his car stopped at the gate of the house of his disciples at Lloyd Road, where His Divine Grace was duly honored by the whole family with *ārati,* etc.
>
> Then Guru Mahārāja alighted from the car, and was conducted to the decorated "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Hall" of the Maṭha, where Prof. L. N. Govindarajan of Loyola College, on behalf of the residents of Gopalapuram colony, read an address of homage to His Divine Grace.
>
> The Hon'ble Minister Dewan Bāhādura S. Kumarswami Reddiar also addressed, on behalf of the greater population of the province, and paid homage to Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja. The Ācārya then gave a suitable and short reply to them.[6]

On 23 January, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed the service of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī in the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha. On 27 January the governor of Madras Presidency, His Excellency Sir George Frederick Stanley, accompanied by Lady Beatrix and his private and military secretaries, came to the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha and laid the foundation stone for its Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kīrtana Hall. His Excellency observed:

> In spite of the very short time in which the Mission has been established in Madras, it has obviously made great headway; it has attracted many influential men to its fold and has succeeded in finding a permanent site on which to expand. I wish to say what a great pleasure it is for me to meet today the spiritual head of the Mission, the President Ācārya, and I pray that his work and all the members of the Mission may be blessed by the divine grace which inspires them, and that they

At a reception in Madras.

> may ever progress toward their object of bringing peace to India and all mankind.[7]

Many South Indian Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas,* themselves deeply learned in *śāstra,* highly regarded Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his disciples for their adherence to *sāstra* and spreading Viṣṇu-bhakti. Reciprocally, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers esteemed the numerous Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* in South India who strictly upheld their culture and principles.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed a desire to preach extensively in South India, considering it a place of devotion due to the widespread influence of Rāmānujācārya and Madhvācārya. He appreciated the people's piety and their developed philosophical sense, but regretted the prevalence of monism. He wanted big Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava temples constructed there. He once said, "I will come again to pick up those disciples of mine who do not complete their *bhajana* and go back to Godhead. At that time I shall simultaneously fulfill my desire to preach in South India and Vṛndāvana, and will establish many *pāda-pīṭhas* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu." He said that in South India people know *arcana* but not *kīrtana,* and that they know Viṣṇu forms of the Lord such as Vāsudeva, Kūrma, Nṛsiṁha, and Nārāyaṇa, but not Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.[8] However, in a lecture given in Bengal he stated:

> The most merciful Śrī Caitanyadeva preached all over South India the glories of Rādhā-Govinda. Yet today the people there are in the same condition as before Śrīman Mahāprabhu came. Therefore it is again required to preach to South Indians, to revive their original consciousness, because they have completely forgotten whatever Śrīman Mahāprabhu had instructed. They say, "We are rational and intelligent men, not sentimental like Bengalis," but they have no interest to hear about Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. When we

With Sri-yuta Panirulu Pillai, the donor of the hall at Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha.

> installed the deity of Rādhā-Govinda in our Rāmānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in South India, local people opposed us and placed so many obstacles. They wanted us to instead install the four-armed form of Lord Viṣṇu. The people of Madras are busy with discussions of Pārtha-sārathi and do not know about Rādhā-Govinda–*līlā.*[9] They are very unfortunate; they have no qualification to see the beautiful service of the Supreme Lord that was inaugurated in North India by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's associates the Six Gosvāmīs.[10]

Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha

While visiting Madras, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave insights into his vast knowledge of *śāstra* and Vedic culture by explaining to his disciples salient points about the dress of South Indian *brāhmaṇas,* who characteristically wore a *veṣṭi* as lower cloth, and a cotton wrap across the shoulders or tied at the waist, with the rest of the chest and back bare except for an *upavīta.*[11] He said that previously the *upavīta* was not used, only the dhoti and upper cloth, but later it became acceptable for *brāhmaṇas* to wear an *upavīta* instead of an upper cloth. When the Bengali devotees expressed surprise that South Indian *brāhmaṇīs* wore their saris with a *kaccha,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that this was the correct Vedic method.

After accepting Vyāsa-*pūjā* in Madras, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura headed back toward Bengal to attend the festival culminating on Gaura-*jayantī.* En route he halted for another rousing reception, this time in Ellore, a town in the Madras Presidency. Led by zamindar Rao Bāhādura Mothi Gaṅgarāju, practically the entire populace feted the *ācārya* with a gala procession of elephants, horses, a band, and hundreds carrying flags, festoons, and ceremonial spears. Seated in a lavishly bedecked horse-drawn coach, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura passed through packed streets under continuous showers of flowers. At the conclusion of the parade, he was accorded a highly enthusiastic reception by different religious associations, each presenting him with panegyrics and certificates of appreciation.

Shortly thereafter, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī again visited South India, stopping briefly in Madras before proceeding to Coimbatore and several other towns, eventually reaching the hill station Ootacamund, where he took relief from the heat of the plains. Remaining there over two months, he sometimes lectured but mostly concentrated on writing—revising Professor Sanyal's English book *Sree Krishna Chaitanya,* working on the English translation of *Brahma-saṁhitā,* completing his own *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* and penning an English booklet about Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya. On the arrival of the cooling monsoonal rains he journeyed to Mysore, reaching there on 17 June 1932 to fulfill an invitation from the Maharaja of Mysore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rājendra Udaiyar Bāhādura. The maharaja was well known as being, like his father before him, adept in both Eastern and Western philosophy and a liberal sponsor of Hindu causes, with particular admiration for the Ramakrishna Mission. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was honored as a state guest and lodged in the fabulous Rāma Palace. The maharaja arranged and attended public meetings at the palace, which featured speeches by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

> ***In Mysore, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was honored as a state guest and lodged in the famous Rāma Palace.***

While in Mysore, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura pointed out that in the far west of Mysore District was situated Śṛṅgerī, where impersonalist Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya had established a *maṭha;* diametrically opposite, in the far east of the district at Mulbagal, a *maṭha* had been founded by Śrī Vādirāja of the Mādhva *sampradāya,* whose upholding of *Śuddha-dvaita-siddhānta* directly opposed Śaṅkarācārya's teachings; and since Mysore city is exactly midway between the two locations, it is fitting at this place to present Lord Caitanya's *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva,* which being the midpoint of unqualified monism and unrelenting dualism, harmonized both stances, bringing to a perfect conclusion the strengths of both.

In an entry dated 21 June 1932 in the visitor's book of the maharaja's Sanskrit college, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wrote:

> Visited H.H. Mahārāja's Sanskrit College on 20-6-32 and was very kindly received and shown over the premises by the worthy principal. We had a look at the famous collection of Sanskrit manuscripts and had a short talk with the professors of the college. We were impressed by the atmosphere of liberal all-round culture of the place and the cordiality of our reception by the instructional staff and students. We could not help feeling the absence of a chair of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* embodying the highest synthesis of religion in its comparative aspects.
>
> Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
> Pātrarāja[12], Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā
> Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrī Māyāpur,
> Nadia, Bengal

After ten days in Mysore the next stop was Trivandrum, where the Maharaja of Travancore also received Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his party as state guests. He personally guided Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura around the magnificent Ananta Padmanābha temple, and heard from him about the teachings of Lord Caitanya in relation to those of the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of South India.

NOTES

1. Several more such *pāda-pīṭhas* have since been established by disciplular descendants of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.
2. The river Vaitaraṇī that surrounds hell is manifested on the earthly plane as this namesake in Orissa. The prototype Vaitaraṇī is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.26.22: "A person born into a responsible family—such as a *kṣatriya,* a member of royalty, or a government servant—but who neglects to execute his prescribed duties according to religious principles and thus becomes degraded, falls down at the time of death into the river of hell known as Vaitaraṇī. This river, which is a moat surrounding hell, is full of ferocious aquatic animals. When a sinful man is thrown into the river Vaitaraṇī, the aquatic animals there immediately begin to eat him, but because of his extremely sinful life, he does not leave his body. He constantly remembers his sinful activities and suffers terribly in that river, which is full of stool, urine, pus, blood, hair, nails, bones, marrow, flesh, and fat."
   Worldly people come to Jajpur to perform rituals whereby they can be freed from sinful reactions that could cause their incarceration in the hellish Vaitaraṇī.
   The prototype Virajā described in scripture is at the border of the material world and must be crossed before entering the spiritual realm. Virajā means *vigata-raja* (*raja:* material world; *vigata:* without). (See *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 21.50)
3. Viṣṇukāñcī: a neighborhood within the temple town Conjeevaram (Kanchipuram).
4. *Harmonist* 28.280 (February 1931).
5. The connection between Kanyākumārī and the unmarried *gopīs* (Vraja-kumārīs) is that the latter prayed to Kātyāyanī, who is nondifferent from Kanyākumārī, to attain Kṛṣṇa as their spouse.
6. Quoted in *Harmonist* 29.256 (February 1932).
7. *Justice,* 26 January 1932; quoted in *Harmonist* 29.286 (March 1932).
8. The statements in this and the previous paragraph were given by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.
9. Pārtha-sārathi: a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "charioteer of Arjuna."
10. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata-tatparya* 69.
11. *Veṣṭī:* a dhoti worn double-folded and without a *kaccha* (the length tucked in at the back).
12. Pātrarāja: president.

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Stages of Consciousness

I RECENTLY BECAME a grandfather for the first time. Looking at my infant granddaughter, Vilasini, I think about what's going on in her mind. Where's her consciousness at this point in her life? The answer seems obvious: She's mostly concerned with eating.

According to the *Taittirīya Upāniṣad,* babies are at the lowest level of consciousness, called *anna-maya* (*anna*, "food"; *maya,* "made of"). It's the first of five *kośas* ("sheaths") covering the soul. The other four are *prāṇa-maya, jñāna-maya, vijñāna-maya,* and *ānanda-maya.* Familiarity with these terms can help us understand that there are higher levels of consciousness than our present one—and that we should aspire for them.

As the name implies, the philosophy of "Kṛṣṇa consciousness" is concerned with consciousness, a symptom of the soul. While some religious traditions emphasize being saved or performing good works to achieve heavenly rewards, the Vedic scriptures stress the need to elevate one's consciousness to progressively higher levels of realization of the Truth.

People today might reject the assumption that individuals are at different levels of consciousness. In the West at least, people tend to think we're all concerned with the same things. Everyone's consciousness is, by necessity, absorbed in day-to-day existence, they reason. Our thoughts focus on work, family, friends, politics, entertainment, and so on. In other words, we're all simply trying to live our lives as best we can.

This conviction is in fact a symptom of the second level of consciousness, called *prāṇa-maya,* wherein we are satisfied just to be alive and we try to stay alive at all costs. Thoughts of a reality beyond the lives we know are uncommon.

But what about philosophical thoughts? What about stepping back and trying to understand what life's really all about?

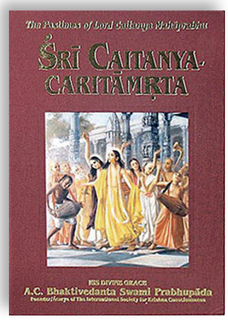
Philosophical inquiry is a step above concerns for the pressing matters of life in the twenty-first century. The thoughtful person rises above the masses to the stage called *jñāna-maya.*

But just thinking about the big questions isn't enough. The quest for metaphysical knowledge finds success when the philosopher realizes that the self is not the body but a pure spirit soul. That discovery of the true self is called *vijñāna-maya,* or realized knowledge, and in our times it is rarely achieved.

Difficult as it is to attain, the *vijñāna-maya* stage is not the end. What could be next? Self-knowledge is incomplete without understanding the self's relationship with everything else, especially with the Supreme Self. With ordinary philosophical inquiry, one can know *about* God, but from the platform of self-knowledge one can, with further progress, know God—and one's relationship with Him. Acting in that relationship is the status called *ānanda-maya.* Although *ānanda-maya* is listed as one of the five sheaths covering the soul, it is actually our pure, original state, free of the material coverings of *anna-maya, prāṇa-maya,* and *jñāna-maya,* and above the transcendental, yet still lacking, *vijñāna-maya.*

The *ānanda* in *ānanda-maya* means "bliss." While bliss or pure happiness is part of our essence as spiritual beings, we can uncover it only by reuniting with God in loving service. Because He is the source of all happiness, our true happiness derives from our relationship with Him. Only when we remove the sheaths covering our pure consciousness can we attain the stage of *ānanda-maya* and recover our right to uninterrupted bliss. The practices of *bhakti-yoga* can carry us beyond the lower stages to this platform of perfection. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda



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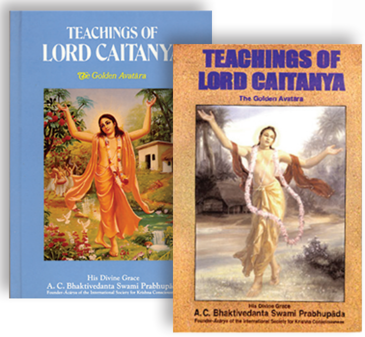

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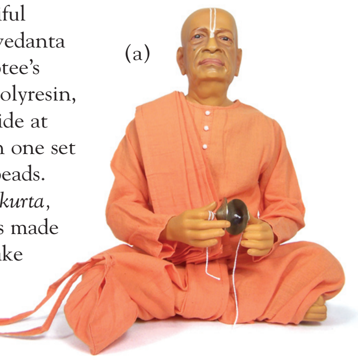

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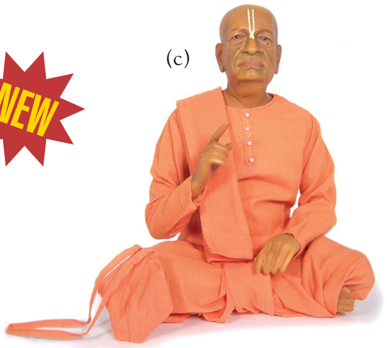

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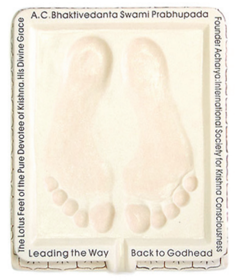

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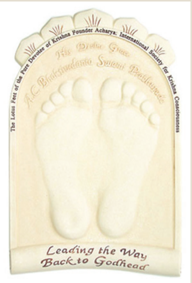

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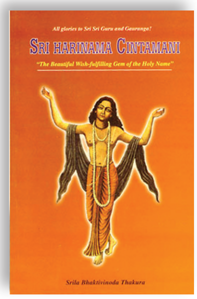
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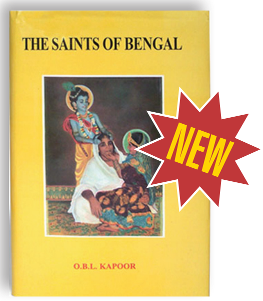
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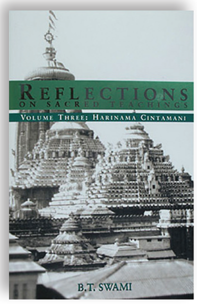
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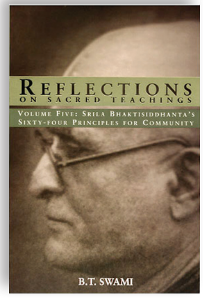
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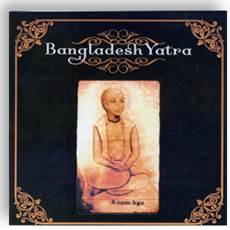
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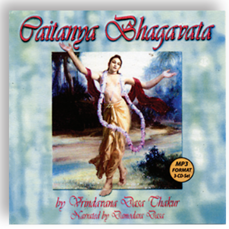
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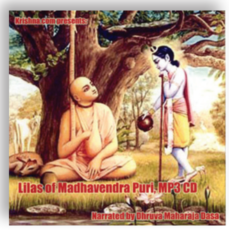
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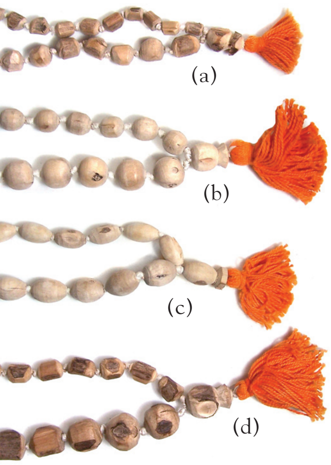

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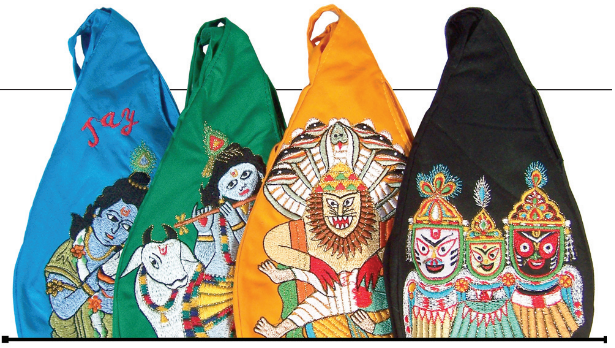

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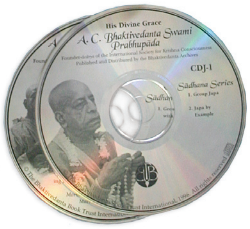

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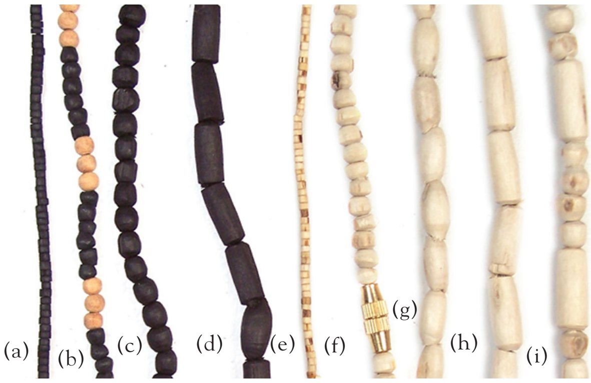

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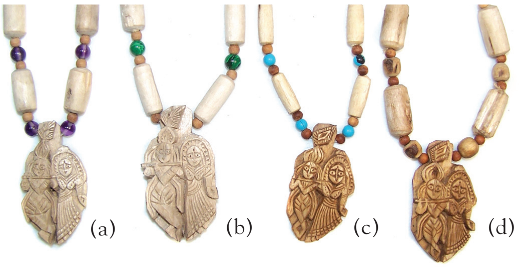

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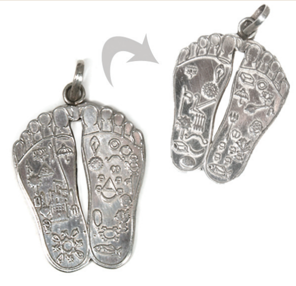

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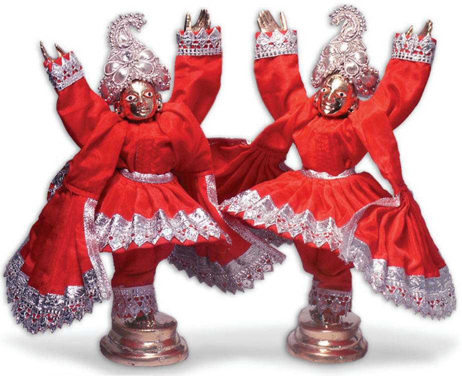
Home Worship



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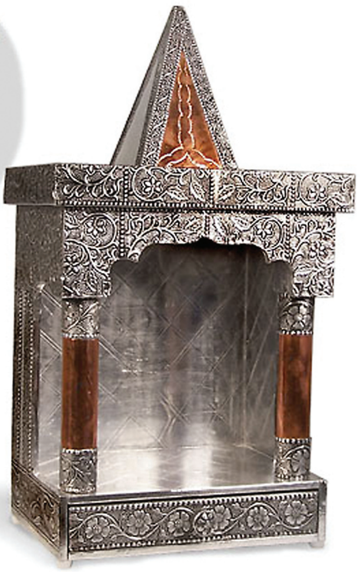
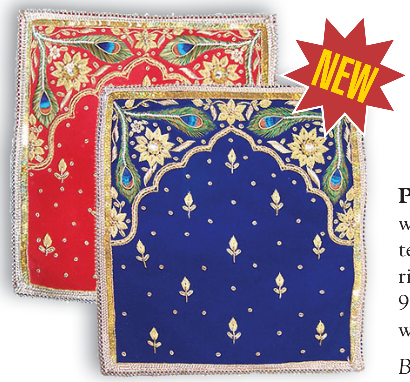


Govardhana Home Altar—Create an oasis of spirituality in your home with this brilliant silver-and-copper-plated altar. Designed specifically for Krishna.com's deity sets, this altar fits 8" deities comfortably. Approximately 14" tall (21½" tall with steeple), 11" wide, 7½" deep. Drawer is 8½" wide and 6½" deep. **$59.95** KXWT659



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VEDIC THOUGHTS

A person in ignorance of the principles of religion who therefore does nothing in the matter of religion is far better than a person who misguides others in the name of religion without reference to the factual religious principles of devotional service. Such so-called leaders of religion are sure to be condemned by Brahmā and other great authorities.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.9.10, Purport

The vibration of My transcendental flute attracts the three worlds, but My ears are enchanted by the sweet words of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.244

The conditioned soul cannot revive his Kṛṣṇa consciousness by his own effort. But out of causeless mercy, Lord Kṛṣṇa compiled the Vedic literature and its supplements, the *Purāṇas.*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.122

The material desire to enjoy the material world and the desire to become liberated from material bondage are considered to be two witches, and they haunt one like ghosts. As long as these witches remain within the heart, how can one feel transcendental bliss? As long as these two witches remain in the heart, there is no possibility of enjoying the transcendental bliss of devotional service.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.22

All the creative energies, which are inconceivable to a common man, exist in the Supreme Absolute Truth. These inconceivable energies act in the process of creation, maintenance, and annihilation. O chief of the ascetics, just as there are two energies possessed by fire—namely heat and light—these inconceivable creative energies are the natural characteristics of the Absolute Truth.

Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.3.2

I offer my obeisances to Him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who manifests His all-attractive personal expansions so that all living beings can achieve liberation.

Nārada Muni
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.46

Those who are eager to awaken their spiritual consciousness and who thus have unflinching, undeviated intelligence certainly attain the desired goal of life very soon.

Nāradīya Purāṇa
Quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.103

Glorifying the Pastimes of God

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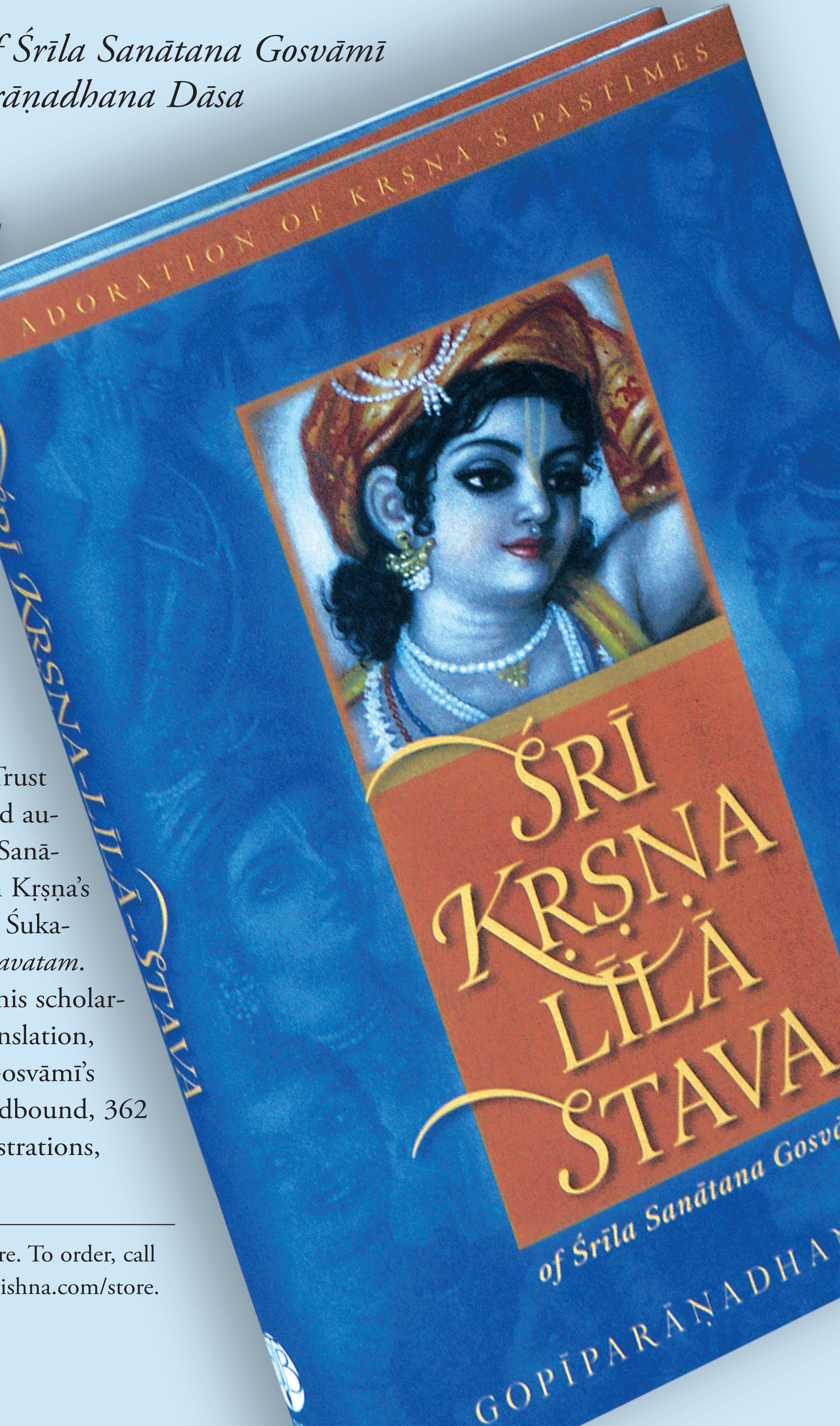
Translated by Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa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